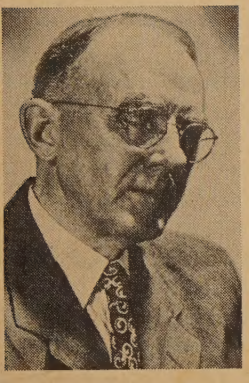
The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



Charles Clayton Morrison:

Protestant Union *NOW*

W. Russell Bowie • *Reinhold Niebuhr*

George A. Buttrick • *G. Bromley Oxnam*

Gerald Kennedy • *Paul Scherer*

Halford E. Luccock • *Ralph W. Sockman*

SERMONS BY THE BEECHER LECTURERS

Honoring Charles Clayton Morrison

XXVII, NO. 1 **JANUARY 1956**

For the Record—

YOU could hardly have reached this column without realizing that there is something very special about this issue. Just the heft of it ought to have suggested that something was up. If you didn't feel the difference, though, you must have seen it when you laid eyes on the cover. No ordinary issue could possibly glitter with the galaxy of names spread out there.

Both hand and eye are right. This is a special issue. We hope that its aspiring specialness is at least a token of the accomplished specialness of him whom we here honor, Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison. As you will note in Turning the Page, his editorial responsibility for The Pulpit was laid down with the old year. When a man of Dr. Morrison's ecclesiastical and historic stature decides on such a step, the decision must be lamented even while the decider is hailed.

How to do that? Putting together an issue full of master-sermons is our way of suggesting what The Pulpit has been at its best—and so, inversely, our reluctance in yielding the one who founded and built it. At the same time, the cooperation of the master-preachers called upon is one way to suggest the affection and esteem in which the church holds Dr. Morrison.

There is evidently no limit to the list of those who would have honored Dr. Morrison with a sermon in this issue if space had permitted. The problem was to find an objective standard for selecting among many friends those whose inclusion would disappoint none and satisfy all. Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching gave the hint. Those lecturers have been called and accepted by our peers as the princes of the American pulpit. Invitations to recent holders of the lectureship brought immediate and enthusiastic response. All were eager to honor Dr. Morrison and to observe the occasion with sermons preached to the glory of God on other occasions. In reflection of Dr. Morrison's first concern, the contributions were real sermons addressed to regular congregations, not tributes to any one man directed to a few other men. Hence the diversity of topics. But the caliber of the contributors is the measure of the esteem and honor intended.

Two tender spots showed up in all this. How to arrange these sermons, first? What is protocol where every man is dean of the corps? The alphabet answered that. I wish the second had been as easy. All of these are men I reverence. Who would dare edit a one? No, not I. But if nothing were cut, we had one sermon too many. Whom to ask to let us hold his sermon to spread the festivities into February? James Robinson was the most recent lecturer, and besides Jim is a long-time friend and colleague and fraternity brother. So his sermon, "Imperative Choices," leads off our February issue. But count him in on this one, too. T.A.G.

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TURNING THE PAGE

The Event of the Month

WITH this issue of The Pulpit I retire as its editor and Theodore A. Gill takes the helm. Dr. Gill has already become well known to r readers as managing editor. His writings in e Pulpit and the *Christian Century* (of which he now becomes managing editor) have won a highly appreciative response. In the language of his Presbyterian background an say that he was "foreordained" to his pres- t vocation: A.B. University of Wisconsin; B.D. inceton Theological Seminary; Th.D. Univer- y of Zurich (in close association with Emil unner); acting pastor, North Avenue Presby- rian Church, New Rochelle, New York; pastor, est End Presbyterian Church, New York city; aplain and professor of religion, Lindenwood llege, St. Charles, Missouri; six months interim eacher, Second Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, d summer preacher, First Presbyterian Church, w York city. He joined the staff of the *Chris- n Century* and The Pulpit a year ago. It pleases to note that he came at the same age at which ecame editor of the *Christian Century* in 1908. y most hearty and hopeful good wishes will fol- v him always. For myself I must say that, as itor of The Pulpit since its founding a quarter a century ago, I retire with both reluctance and lief. Reluctance, because it has been an inspiring ought that, on this Editor's Page I was having timate fellowship each month with so great a dy of the church's ministry. Relief, because I can longer find an excuse for not buckling in to a sk I have long wanted to do. I would like to write e story of the *Christian Century* as both a spec- tor and participant in the events of the past lf century. But I make no promises!

e Pulpit Gets New Editor

The Book of the Month

EW TESTAMENT FAITH FOR TODAY. *By Amos N. Wilder. Harper, $2.50.*

HE author is a distinguished New Testament scholar and also a uniquely sensitive inter- eter of the modern mind as revealed in its litera- re, especially in its poetry. This combination vests his book with peculiar importance. He nses with fine insight the great gap between the odern mind and the literature of the New Testa- ent, and sets for himself the urgent task of inter- eting each to the other. His thesis is that a namic and ecstatic religion, such as original ristianity was, could not express itself except creating a language of its own. And this nguage had to draw upon the symbolism, the agery and the mythology of the culture in ose context it emerged. As Christianity grew d spread to other cultures its language had to be interpreted in other forms in order to be understood at all. He finds three distinct modes of interpretation in the New Testament itself: (1) Jesus' own proclamation of the Kingdom of God; (2) Paul's message of justification by faith, and (3) the Fourth Gospel. To each of these he devotes a full chapter, showing that the differences of language and emphasis left the essential message identical and unimpaired. Is it possible to do for the modern mind what was done within the New Testament itself? Dr. Wilder says it is possible. But he does not follow all the way with those who "demythologize" the New Testament: He holds that "the greater a religious writing is, the more indissoluble is its form and substance." No language of modern interpretation can substitute for the rich language created by the original faith itself.

A Thought for the Month

JUDAS had just gone out. They were eleven men plus One, plus God. Jesus was on the point of leaving them. They would surely be tempted to regard as a dream all that had happened. Searching for some word that would steady them in the days ahead, what was it that he most wished them to understand? His moral teaching? His parables of the Kingdom? No. Too late to go over these again! He now told them something that had been *happening to them* all along. You and I, he said, are now bound together in an organic unity like a vine and its branches. While we have been teaching and learning, the Father has been working his will in us. He has made us one body. This is the most precious fruit of our association together—not your understanding of my words (alas, how little did they understand!), nor even your acceptance of my messiahship (how crass was their conception!), but our communal union, you with me and we together with the Father. Our union is inviolable. You did not devise it—it "came upon you" as a work of God. You did not choose me, but I chose you. The initiative was mine, not yours; aye, it was not mine, but the Father's whose work I do. They were no longer their own. Their private wills were merged in the sovereign will of the Father. Not until Pentecost did they realize what had happened to them. Then, in the ecstasy of its revelation, they said, "We cannot but speak," and Paul in a daring metaphor declared, "I am the slave of Christ and bear in my body the marks of his branding iron." Clearly Christ had chosen them, not they him.

Jesus' Last Words To His Disciples*

*Abridged from my *What Is Christianity?* the Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale University (1939), pp. 129 ff.

Charles Clayton Morrison

By Charles Clayton Morrison

PROTESTANTISM IS READY NOW

THE ecumenical movement for the unity of Christendom operates in three zones: (1) on a world scale, concerning itself with all Christian churches throughout the world; (2) in a middle zone, concerned with the churches of continental Europe and the West; and (3) in Western Protestantism, concerning itself with the denominational churches of the United States and Canada, including their younger churches in foreign lands. The problem of achieving Christian unity is, in essence, the same in all these zones, but different in the degree of their nearness to or remoteness from the goal. On the world scale the difficulties are greater. In the middle zone they are substantial but less. In continental America such progress has already been made that the goal of One church can actually be envisioned.

Here the churches not only participate in the world-wide ecumenical movement, but have developed an ecumenical movement of their own. During the past fifty years, the sharp edges of sectarian claims and feelings have been worn down by the experience of many forms of cooperative association, including national and community federations. In these associations they have discovered that the evangelical faith which we all share in equal measure transcends all our differences and dwarfs them into irrelevancy. Thus the way would seem to be open for Protestantism in this zone to become One church.

The Greenwich Plan

Already some sixteen mergers of denominations, by twos or threes, have been achieved and other such unions are contemplated. One of these represents the rapprochement of eight or nine denominations under the so-called Greenwich Plan* for their organic union. This plan presupposes that Protestantism has now reached the stage in the development of its own inner or spiritual unity where a united church can be realistically projected. In my own words, I would interpret this presupposition as follows: *The treasures of all our evangelical churches—their doctrines, their polities, their fellowships, their very habits of doing things—can be taken up and embraced in One church without compromise of conscience or the restriction of Christian freedom.* This faith is ultimately derived from Christ the Head of the Church. But, happily, its realism is confirmed by the concrete evidence of a firm trend in Protestantism in the direction of its realization.

The present stage in this movement has been reached and illuminated by a progressive series of changes in the spirit and practice of the denominations over the past two or three generations. These changes point distinctly, I shall affirm, in the direction of a united church. Whether Protestantism is ready to become One church is a question that is being answered for us by the denominations themselves. They have reached the point where their separation can no longer be reasonably defended.

A Firm Trend Toward Union

It is important that the ecumenical movement in this particular zone shall take account of the actual present state of mind of the denominations. Where this is not done, the discussion tends to wander off into bypaths of irrelevancy or into depths of theological or ecclesiological theory which cloud the real issue and obstruct the open road. I shall name and discuss seven of these ecumenical commitments of the denominations. Taken cumulatively, they call imperatively for a definitive commitment to a united church.

1. *We are all agreed that the members of all our churches are Christians, equally accepted by Christ as members of His church.* There was a time when we could not assume a unanimous and hearty approval of this affirmation. It was not openly denied, but it was often ambiguously affirmed with qualifications and reservations. That ingenious theological device called "the uncovenanted mercies of God" was brought into play to cover the embarrassment of those whose sectarian conscience inhibited a hearty acknowledgment that members of other churches stood before God on an equality with those of their own "true faith." Happily that spirit is with us no longer.

2. *All our denominations are by intention, conviction and in fact equally Christian churches:* Not one will claim to be more Christian than others. It is still somewhat difficult for some to make this affirmation, but it is impossible for them not to make it. It used to be hard for Baptists to affirm it and for Episcopalians and for Disciples of Christ. We squirmed and talked about the *esse*

*The Plan is the outcome of five years of study by officially appointed representatives of nine denominations. While it is projected for these denominations, it goes beyond them and could include the whole of evangelical Protestantism. It has not yet been made public, but is in the hands of the appropriate commissions of the participating churches. The commission of my own denomination recently held a two-day plenary conference of some fifteen area study groups who submitted criticisms and amendments, accompanied by enthusiastic approval of the Plan as a whole. I am informed that the commissions of other churches are proceeding in their own way to do the same.

"Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas . . . all are yours." I Corinthians 3:22

TO BECOME ONE CHURCH

nd the *bene esse* of the church, and about immer-ion-baptism and about the freedom of the local ongregation from "ecclesiasticism." But we have hanged. And when the ghost of these dead con-roversies appears and tells us that by making this cknowledgment we would deny the faith of our athers, we are not scared. We can no longer pray he pharisee's prayer, but like the publican, we resent ourselves and our denomination before od in a spirit of humility. A larger faith, a sensi-ivity to the values possessed by other churches nd a more Christian humility have taken hold of ur hearts and driven out the evil spirit of sec-arian pride.

3. *All our denominations share equally in the in of maintaining schismatic churches.* It is a ruism of the Christian faith that schism is sin. Who did sin—the fathers of your denomination r the church from which they broke away? We annot and need not know. It may have been the issidents, or it may have been the church which hey renounced, or the wrong may have been on oth sides. But there is always sin in schism. "You re carnal," says Paul, when you divide Christ's ody. Schism is not the kind of sin that is covered y the Ten Commandments, or by any social tandard. The secular mind does not understand why schism is sin. Schism in the Body of Christ is Christian sin. For the Christian conscience to e comfortable in it betrays an insensitivity to the ature of our holy faith and of the church which nshrines it. All our denominations, yours and ine, are caught in this indisputable equality in he sin of schism. As Archbishop Temple said, "So ong as any of us are in schism, all are in schism."

Where Is the Sin?

Where is the locus of this sin? Is it in our theo-ogical differences or our different modes of wor-hip or our different forms of church order? No. There is no sin in these diversities. Indeed, there s virtue in them, and they can enrich the fellow-hip of a united church. Our sin lies in our main-aining separate man-made *churches* based upon hem. How may we hope by God's grace to be ab-olved of this sin? There is only one way: *We must cease being churches.* We must trustfully offer to the fellowship of the whole church what we call our "distinctive witness" to the Christian faith. This is Christian unity. This spells a united church.

4. *Our way of thinking about the Christian faith has undergone profound changes in the past half-century.* It is necessary now to look at our denominational differences in terms of their actual contemporary reality, not merely in terms of their historical origin. Yet when we are asked to state what our denomination "stands for," do we not turn to the history books where we find only what a long time ago it "stood for"? The fallacy here is obvious. The ecumenical movement is not concerned to unite the churches of a century ago; it is concerned to unite the living churches of today. These churches have all passed through an era of profound change in theological thinking and in their evaluation of the very issues out of which our denominations arose. So true is this that if any one of our evangelical denominations was not now in existence, few if any of its members would feel any urge of conscience to start it or to restore it.

Great Changes in Our Thinking

If this fact were seriously taken into account by the ecumenical movement it would save endless discussion of matters that are irrelevant to the concrete problem of a united church. I do not agree with that shallow view of Christian unity which scorns theology and theological discussion, and insists that it should have no place in the united church. On the contrary, my view is that a united church is the true place for the consideration of the great themes to which theology is devoted. We will always have a sectarian theology as long as we have sectarian churches. An ecumenical theology is one of the most urgent desiderata of the Christian faith. But we can achieve an ecumenical theology only within an ecumenical church.

No doubt, the conversations in the world-wide zone of ecumenical operation require long and patient consideration of theological and other ideological subjects. Conversation between the churches of East and West is clouded with mutually unfamiliar ideologies. A common universe of discourse has to be attained before there can be much talk about unity. But the denominations of Protestantism already enjoy a common ideology. Long isolated within narrow denominational walls, their main conversation with one another in the past was in the form of debate. But their mentality has now been liberated into the open spaces of common evangelical Christianity, and debating has ceased because there is so little between them that is vital enough to argue about.

5. *The doctrinal differences which formerly existed between the denominations are now em-*

braced in the denominations themselves. In this degree our denominations are themselves becoming ecumenical! If a denomination can embrace a considerable variety of differences on traditionally controversial subjects, and also certain innovating interpretations of modern thought on things both old and new, is it not about ready to go into a united church? My answer is that it would be more at home in the united church than to continue living with itself! This is because a denomination that has become ecumenical minded still retains its sectarian creed or confession of faith. Whether this is explicitly formulated or stereotyped in an ideology, it operates in the same manner. Thus the ecumenical spirit of such a denomination must live in constant insecurity lest a factious element seize upon its long quiescent sectarian creed and in its name divide the church. But the united church would openly embrace these various confessions of faith without standardizing any formulation or stereotype. Thus the major cause of schism would be removed.

Passing of the Heretic

An instructive fact to be noted in this connection is the virtual passing of the heretic. Since the days of those famous "heretics," Swing and Briggs and McGiffert and Foster and Gilbert and Thomas, to name no others—the legal apparatus of ecclesiastical sectarianism had become rusted with disuse. But it was recently called into play in the state of Wisconsin to convict as heretics three young ministers of devout evangelical faith who deviated from the wording of a confession of faith formulated more than 400 years ago. I cannot believe that the whole United Lutheran Church, except these three young ministers, has been impervious to the light which modern evangelical thought has thrown upon the issues for which these men were convicted of heresy. But this is not my point. What I want to say is that if the Lutheran tradition were embraced in a united church, its supporters would be freed from the legal necessity of resorting to an inhumane, self-righteous and grossly un-Christian method of maintaining its sectarian integrity. They would find themselves in a context for dealing with such "deviations" in a humane and Christian manner.

The momentary situation in Congregationalism presents a pathetic but ludicrous absurdity. Instead of a denomination pronouncing a verdict of heresy upon some individual, a factional minority pronounces the whole denomination heretical! The Congregational denomination has been second to none in its more than a half century of unanimous commitment to the cause of Christian unity. A score of years ago, it actually united with another denomination. Its own inner unity was maintained throughout the Fundamentalist storm of the 1920s, with no appreciable loss or disturbance. But now the unexpected has happened. Congregationalism has produced a Fundamentalism of its own! A minority group takes for itself the title "Association for the Preservation of Congregational Principles." It charges the whole denomination with apostasy and would forbid 75 per cent o the local churches to exercise their congregationa freedom by uniting with another denominatio This is the ultimate irony of denominationalism It re-enacts a procedure that stains the whole his tory of this unholy system.

But these two instances do not nullify the fac that the differences between our denomination are now largely embraced by the denomination themselves. Rather, they illuminate it (1) by th humiliation with which these anachronistic pro cedures are regarded by the main body of opinio in the two denominations concerned, and (2) b the demonstration that so long as the denomina tions exist as *churches,* these shameful disloyaltie to Christ are bound to recur.

The Great Delusion

6. *Our denominations are now beginning to se that their differences, such as they are, can b more hopefully reconciled within a united churc than in sectarian isolation.* The great delusion tha has obsessed our denominations is that a separat *church* is necessary in order to bear witness t some Christian truth which is held distinctively By "bearing witness" is meant persuading th general church to accept it. This delusion has al ways been cherished by all our denominations Should we not now be able to learn from ou history how false it is? What denomination ha contributed its "distinctive truth" to the whol church by this means? Has Presbyterianism? Ha Lutheranism? I know of no more tragic illustra tion of this fallacy than the long and stubbor separation of the Lutheran and Reformed church es. Vital differences they seemed to be four cen turies ago. But because these two branches of th Reformation were isolated from each other behin the walls of separate ecclesiastical churches, they have not been able to see that the truth of one i not opposed but complementary to the truth of th other.

Have the Congregationalists made an impres sion upon the rest of the church by their sectarian illustration of the autonomy of its local churches? Have the Disciples and the Baptists made an im pression upon Methodists and Episcopalians by bearing a sectarian witness to immersion-bap tism? Have the Episcopalians made any impres sion at all upon the other churches of the Reforma tion by holding their historic episcopate in sec tarian exclusiveness? Away with this shabby ra tionalization! To build a sectarian wall around a Christian truth does not "bear witness" to it—it takes that truth out of circulation. Prejudices are raised against the adoption of any Christian trea sure offered with a sectarian patent on it.

7. *The association of our denominations in na tional and community federations has led them into a mode of cooperation which is, in principle, organic.* When the practice of "comity" was first proposed for application to the foreign and home mission fields, some denominations sensed a "dan ger" in it and refused to participate. However, it was innocent enough. It practically meant noth

g more than an agreement to stay out of one nother's territory. This was nearly fifty years go. Today, however, the problem of Protestant- m in American cities has become acute by the ecimation of what is called the "inner city" and e mushroom growth of suburbia. The federated enominations sense the scandal that would ensue pon the mad rush of sectarian self-interest into ese lush fields. Operating not by a self-denying ntractual agreement among themselves to stay t of a community first entered by one of them, ey commit the whole of unchurched suburbia their federation, to allocate specific communi- es to specific denominations and aid the develop- ent of their churches therein.

If we take a good look at this procedure, we nnot miss the organic principle of united action the denominations in establishing one another's urches! So long as comity meant only a nega- ve self-restraint, it was, as I have ironically id, "innocent" enough. But this blessed inno- nce has now grown into a conscious organic clesiastical unity *at this one point*. If the denom- nations can cooperate in establishing one anoth- 's churches, what becomes of their special "wit- ess" by which they have immemorially justified eir sectarian separateness? Their special wit- ess is manifestly either held with indifference or s possession by the general church is acknowl- dged.

Other instances in this category could be added. will refer to one more, namely, the Federated heological Faculty of the University of Chicago. our denominational seminaries have created an rganic union of their faculties to study and teach heology and train candidates for the Christian inistry. These seminaries represent Baptist, ongregational, Unitarian and Disciples denom- nations. Their united faculty is presided over by Lutheran dean. It includes Episcopal, Presbyte- ian, Reformed, Quaker and Lutheran professors addition to those representing the four feder- ted denominations. The primary inspiration of his unique development is the ecumenical spirit. What it means as an illustration of the new minds Protestantism your imagination will make ir- nnecessary for me to elaborate.

At the Point of Decision

The changes that have taken place in our d ominations have brought us a long way on th oad to unity. We now stand at the place wher ecision must be made. The spirit of Christ wh as opened our eyes to the evil of our divisio nd ameliorated our differences to the point eir relative indifference, will not let us sta azing idly into space. The American branch he World Council of Churches is organizing hurch-wide study of the theme, "What Kind Unity Do We Seek?" I offer the foregoing e ences as marking a distinct progression, bo gical and historical, toward one and no alte ative goal. We may hope that this American stu ill not bog down in theological or ecclesiologic heory which no doubt is relevant in other zon of the ecumenical movement but irrelevant in the scene of American Protestantism. *We are ready to become one church.* Protestantism is in quest of a church that both transcends the outworn denominational system and embraces all its treasures in one body.

The unity we seek stands in contrast to the idea of a "monolithic" church, a conception which is often imputed to the advocates of church union. I do not know of any representative Protestant churchman who conceives of the united church as consisting all of one piece. Such a church, if it could be achieved, would be quickly broken by internal pressure into many pieces. We seek no such unity. Rather, our goal is an inclusive church, rich in the variety of its thought and practice and its sensitive concern for the freedom of its members under Christ. In a word, a church in which variety is a virtue no less than unity.

Our churches have come a long way in our sectarian wanderings. But the road we have taken in the past half century has brought us together in sight of the shining tableland which is our goal. An upward path stretches clearly before us. And the light that streams upon it is reflected from the face of Christ who stands with outstretched arms. Let us go up together!

A Prayer for Us

e devotion did not touch the work which en and there was the work and the only work for them to do." Yet, as Phillips Brooks greatly knew, to *do* the work of the routine day and do it honestly, to carry it through till the last nail is driven, to do it wholeheartedly as though it were not accident but God's assignment—that is to be on the way of working out salvation.

Nothing Is Little

And this can be true whether we are in or out of the immediate atmosphere of "sacred studies." Girls who get breakfast in the morning with a spirit that makes those around them praise God for life, young wives and mothers who through a whole day's prosaic duties carry the happy radiance of unselfish love, husband and wife who together are making a home where purity and peace will dwell—these are living already in the forecourt of God's Kingdom. Said Martin Luther: "It looks like a great thing when a monk renounces everything, goes into a cloister, and lives a life of asceticism, fasts, watches and prays and the like. . . . On the other hand, it looks like a small thing to cook, clean and do other housework. But if God's command is there, even such a lowly employment must be praised as a service to God, far surpassing the holiness and asceticism of all monks and nuns." So it was in Martin Luther's time, and long before in the Philippi of St. Paul; and similarly today in the little places where you live, and next year at what may often seem unglamorous posts in country or town, some of you will be working out your own salvation.

That is one part of Paul's great message. But

(Continued on page 38)

It Shall Come Back

By George A. Buttrick

"Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land." Jeremiah 32:15.

A CERTAIN church has poured gifts and prayers for fifty years into a mission station in China. The project was not narrowly conceived. There was, for instance, a farm that by research added millions of dollars to crop values in that area; and schools and a hospital that gave friendly expression to the faith of the sanctuary, the latter being built in Chinese architecture. In fact, the whole enterprise was under Chinese leadership. Now the venture has been overrun by communism. I am not interested in any wholesale castigation of communism, and intend no wholesale endorsement of the church. But it is tragic that brain-washing has taken the place of mutual trust; and that man is no longer regarded as a child of God, but as the spawn of the economic process. Our topic is illustrated in that instance. What about the apparent eclipse of goodness in our world? As another instance, remember that the recent flood wiped out an orphanage on the Pennsylvania hills. What are we to say?

I

A certain story in the Bible is so pertinent that it might have been specially written for our purpose. It has its touch of absurd brave humor. The Chaldean invader was sweeping down on Israel, and one Hanamel saw that his farm would soon be engulfed. Cannily he said: "Perhaps I could sell it." So he appealed to his cousin Jeremiah to exercise the right of the next of kin, and buy the land. Now Jeremiah was unmarried, he was in prison for views which conventional minds deemed traitorous, the enemy was almost at the gate, and all parties to the proposed real estate deal would doubtless soon be carried captive to Babylon. But Jeremiah bought the farm, not because Hanamel was the world's super-salesman, but as an acted sermon on faith. "No panic price," said Jeremiah. "A fair market price!" He kept all the legalities: an open deed for public record, and a sealed deed (in a Dead Sea Cave kind of jar) for confirmation. Jeremiah thus thumbed his nose at events. He told us that there is no lost good, and told us why: "Thus says the Lord . . . Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land."

II

The only comparable instance in my poor range of knowledge is the sale of the farm on which Hannibal's tent was pitched, three miles from Rome, during his successful invasion. That sale, in noble faith, was transacted in the Roman forum. But Jeremiah's business has much deeper tones. He believed that God was using the Chaldean invasion as a scourge on Israel for her breach of God's covenant. He believed it, and said it. That was why he was in prison. That, perhaps, was why he had never married. *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (let us hope that our grandchildren may not learn that we made that book a best seller)! Besides, the land meant far more to Israel than to us or to ancient Rome: land and covenant were almost one. The land was the sign and seal of the covenant. Probably Jeremiah had little hope that he himself would ever live on his purchased farm. That was not the point. He was preaching a sermon in the deed (if only all of us preachers could so preach!) on the text: "Lift up your hearts: the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Or, rather, on his text: "Thus says the Lord . . . Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land." Have not the newspapers recently told of a lake being drained in Ireland to disclose a village 4500 years old? Jeremiah said: "This flood shall pass, and the covenant land shall reappear washed clean of disobedience." Can you hear the story without a braver heart? All right: that braver beating of the heart is existential evidence, of perhaps the only kind that brave men will seek.

III

Let us look more closely at this matter of proof. Christian faith, or any worthy faith, can never be demonstrated by logic. God is not the end term of a syllogism. If he were, he could not be God. He would be in the power of *our* mind. He would be an existent among other existents, one term (however superior) among other terms. Logic

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GEORGE A. BUTTRICK in 1954 joined the faculty of Harvard University as chairman of its board of preachers and Plummer professor of Christian morals, after twenty-seven years in New York city as the minister of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. His many published works include his Lyman Beecher Lectures of 1931 which appeared under the title, Jesus Came Preaching. *Though born and educated in England, all his ministry has been in America, where he has served Congregational as well as Presbyterian churches.*

s not establish truth: truth by its axioms en-
es logic to live. God is the whole axiom, the
son and ground by which we go on living; the
d of axiom which moves a man to say:

> For right is right, since God is God,
> And right the day must win;
> To doubt would be disloyalty,
> To falter would be sin.*

hen Japan invaded China, Heywood Broun, a
w York columnist, not then a religious man,
nething of a sophisticate, wrote an indignant
umn entitled "It Shall Come Back!" How did he
ow? He knew, or else the whole scheme of things
mockery. From that alternative we shrink with
shudder of soul. If life were mockery, and we
ew it, something other than mockery would
ereby be in us, and we would still have to reckon
th—with the very ground of our nature.

Of course the mystery of time is here involved.
d does not balance his books every month or
ar, except in strange hidden ways. He brings
securities on the proud, including the proud of
nd, even in the instant of their victory; and he
aws the lowly into his light, even in the instant
their calamity. But *outwardly* his books are not
lanced even every generation. They seem never
be balanced in this planet, a fact that brings
smay on the man who lives for this world only.
course the books *are* being balanced. Can you
ter a gothic cathedral, such as that in Durham,
membering how it was built by community labor
great cost—the woodcarver working on a few
ches of screen, and hoping that some man in
nother age would complete the work—can you
e such a shrine, the marching pillars leading
to the symbol set in deep shadow, without being
uickened at heart? It was built for nothing more
bstantial than a prayer, which is not man's act
one, but the movement of God in man's life. Most
en diced and drank, and laughed at "this re-
gious bunk." But when you visit Europe, you
o not seek out the place where men diced and
rank. Maybe the "proof" of Christian faith can
ever be anything more solid than, let us say, the
ach *Mass in B Minor*.

Yet there is always enough evidence that God
ill restore the waste places: enough for our
ourage, but never so much that we are spared
he venture. Goodness is not a sure thing. If it
ere, there might be no goodness, but only a
hrewd bet, prudentially, on a sure thing. Again
nd again we are flung back on faith, which
indles reason, with ever and again some bright
eckoning to cheer us on our way. This beckon-
ng, as an instance: the exiles *did* return from
abylon. They did reclaim their farms. Jeremiah's
eal estate deed was not lost, at least not lost in
his sense: the Scriptures record it, and you and
discuss it with a whimsical smile, saying to one
nother: "He bet his soul against history!" If
nly the deed were in the near-by museum! We
night more quickly take a new grip on courage!

*Frederick William Faber, "The Right to Win."

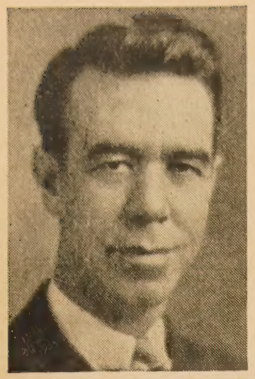
The whole episode is a foregleam of the cross of Christ!

That mention reminds us that the land comes back not as it once was, but in new and changed form. Israel returned from Babylon, and again broke the covenant. Then the covenant was renewed in Jesus: "This is the new covenant in my blood." Then the church emerged, the new people of the covenant—under the same mission fulfilled in Christ, under the same judgment in their disobedience, under the same renewing mercy. As for Jesus, how much would you have bet on him on the first Good Friday? The religious community traduced him. Empire trod on him as callously as on a moth. The crowd gaped at him as they might at a dogfight. How much would you have bet? Of course, if Jeremiah had been there, he would have bought the land on which the cross stood. Other people would have said: "The place of a crucifixion is accursed." The owner of the land—if anyone owned it—would have said: "A fool and his money are soon parted." But Jeremiah would have said: "No panic price! A good round sum for it. Let it never be said that the place where he died was cheaply bought. And we will do it legally, for the world hereafter will wish to see this deed of transfer." "Thus says the Lord: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land."

IV

There are subthemes and variations in this music. Would Jeremiah, living today, say that communism is the scourge of God? And would we clap him in jail for subversion? That overrunning of the mission-project in China is a troubling portent. It leaves us with uneasy conscience. We fail to ask how and why communism came. We would have to say: from the lonely, fierce and fiercely compassionate mind of Karl Marx—"out of" Engels, and he "out of" an arbitrary transfer of the Hegelian dialectic from philosophy to economics. But that would be the academic answer. Communism came from man's insensate pride, but also from the indignant sufferings of the mass of mankind in Russia. It sprang up in the desolation that followed one world war, and grew in the desolation that followed another world war. Meanwhile there was a church in Russia that may have been richer in ritual than in the courage of love. When was communism most rife in America? In the "Depression." Where? In the poverty of Harlem. Meanwhile Western nations spent their substance in comfort and armaments. I know that this account is a sweeping oversimplification of present history. Perhaps it was not surprising that compassionate but fuzzy-minded students, who had no safeguard in vital faith, should turn to communism. The whole portent leaves us uneasy. Perhaps the church in Russia and beyond Russia helped to provoke communism—a fact that does not condone the Russian heresy. Would Jeremiah say of modern Russia what he said of Babylon: the scourge of the Lord on a wayward

(Continued on page 45)



Christian Colonists, Builders, Adventurers, Experimenters

The Pioneers of Life

By Gerald Kennedy

"You killed the pioneer of life." Acts 3:15 (Moffatt).

AS ONE who knows little Greek and no Hebrew, I have found the modern translations of the Scriptures a very great help. They give us new insights as they put the ancient meanings into contemporary terms. This is what Moffatt has done for us in the translation of a word used by Peter in a sermon explaining the healing of a lame man. Although they had killed this One whom he describes as "the pioneer of life," still it is by his power that men are healed and redeemed. And because Christians are the followers and imitators of Jesus, then it must follow that they are to be a fellowship of pioneers.

It is true, of course, that many times in life we must fight holding actions. There are times when we cannot advance and when our testing comes in terms of hanging on to what we have gained, even when we are weakened by weariness and discouragement. But this is not to be regarded as more than a temporary expedient. This is not the Christian way nor the long strategy of the church. We are to be on the march, filled with the spirit of the offensive, never content with the defensive position nor the apologetic spirit. In a word, we are to be the followers of one who was and is the Pioneer of Life.

Marks of the Colonist

One of the famous epitaphs of the west says:

> To Lem S. Frame, who during his life shot 89 Indians, whom the Lord delivered into his hands, and who was looking forward to making up his hundred before the end of the year, when he fell asleep in Jesus at his house at Hawk's Ferry, March 27, 1843.

This is a rather typical appraisal of too many Christian lives. They are spent in the same worldly, pagan pursuits as their neighbors, but a touch of sentimental piousness is thrown over them toward the end.

Christians are destined to become something more than people covered over with a thin veneer of religious platitudes. St. Paul says they are to be "a colony of heaven" (Phil. 3:20—Moffatt). You see at once the connection between this insight and Peter's description of Jesus as a pioneer. The pioneer so often is a colonist, establishing in a wilderness, or on a frontier, a community that is the homeland in miniature.

One of the main marks of the colonist is that he owes his final allegiance to another king. He is a representative of a master who may be far away across the sea or on the other side of a continent. In the final testing, he will be true to his sovereign regardless of the pressures of the immediate vicinity. He lives in a certain locality, but his allegiance is not entirely to the status quo, nor is he content to adjust his customs and habits to the local tribe. Unless he remembers whom he represents, he can never be the forerunner of civilization.

Church and State

Now this sums up the whole problem of the relation of church and state, which is always an uneasy one for the Christian. He cannot take an extreme position on either side, but must always hold the two loyalties together in a constant tension. He cannot say, for instance, that the state is his master and he will do whatever it commands under any and all circumstances. The Christian society recognizes that it has no right to make such a demand, and so it provides the right of men to be excused from its demands when conscience insists. On the other hand, the Christian cannot withdraw from the state and deny its claims. The New Testament is quite clear on this and it reminds all Christians that they are also citizens who owe something to Caesar. Both Jesus and Paul make plain this point, as do the later Epistles.

There is no easy answer. Dr. Henry Hitt Crane relates that a young C.O. was brought before the judge during the war. The judge was unsympathetic with the young man's position and asked sternly where he thought he would be if he took such a position in Hitler's Germany. The young man replied that he would probably be in a concentration camp and perhaps killed. "But by the way, Judge," said the young man, "where would you be if you were in Hitler's Germany?" Which is to say that the problem is not one facing conscientious objectors only but every Christian man. We are a colony of heaven and we owe, therefore, an ultimate loyalty to the King whom the world does not own.

Divine Necessity

Because we are a colony, we have a home base and a model. We are to build society on that foundation and we are to establish in this worldly wilderness a bridgehead of the Kingdom of God. This is why an individual Christian who stays outside the church is a contradiction. His life must be a proclamation and a demonstration, but

e demonstration is a social matter. John Wesley s quite right when he insisted that the Bible ows nothing of solitary religion. It is ever are of the community, because it assumes the tablishment of colonies of heaven.

There is an old Spanish proverb to the effect at a bird can fly about in all directions, but if is to fulfill its destiny it must build a nest. hich is a parable! The individual Christian may nder about over the earth with spectacular riftness, making brilliant analyses and prophees. But the job is done finally when a Christian mmunity is established in a pagan land, which carnates the heavenly home and the divine ingdom. In a word, there is a divine necessity r the church.

Highway Builders

Another sign of the pioneer is the building of e means of communication. He is a road builder, r one thing. So Isaiah writes:

> A voice cries:
> "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
> make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

he great pioneers have all understood the imortance of roads, and the most successful conuerors of the wilderness have established the ighways connecting the established settlements ith the frontiers.

Some years ago we were visiting some friends the south of Wales. One evening our hostess ok us for a rather long walk to visit an ancient hurch in the vicinity. We went across fields, over tiles and through gates until we found a beautiful ld church on a hilltop. I commented that in merica we build our churches close to the main rteries of traffic, that they might be seen and ade more convenient to enter. The lady took us ver to the edge of the churchyard to a wide ditch unning straight across the fields. "This," she aid, "is the old Roman road," and sure enough, he ancient stones were still in their place. When he church was built several centuries before, it ad been located by the side of one of these roads he Romans built across Europe and the British sles. The Roman Empire, still remembered for ts victories and achievements, built roads that are ver famous for their extent and their durability. The Romans knew that to defeat their enemies nly was not enough, but to make their victories asting they had to bind the empire together with oads.

Today we find a different situation in a place ike Alaska. There it is not necessary to build oads over the difficult terrain of that far northern territory. Instead, you build air strips, for the airplane is the opener of the northland and the routes are through the air. But the principle is the same. Pioneers build roads on the land, the sea or the air.

Bridging Human Understanding

It is a sign of our Christian failure if we accept the inevitability of two separate worlds with an iron curtain between them. When men accept the future as a long waiting for a war to the death between two mighty enemies, it is no wonder that they lose hope and fall a prey to hysteria and fear. The Christian never doubts that under the surface of any ideology, there is a son of God. He believes that what God can do is beyond the measure of man's mind. He is committed to the faith that God wills brotherhood among all men. In the meantime, he must see his vocation as the pioneer who with Christ is dedicated to the task of crossing barriers and preparing the highways through the jungles of hate and suspicion. He is no sentimentalist, minimizing the terrifying difficulties in the way, but he knows that there is no other way to the freedom and opportunity he craves for his children.

When the Christians see themselves as pioneers, they not only build roads but they also construct bridges across the chasms and rivers separating men. The personnel director of a large corporation, responsible for obtaining the leaders of the future, has a strange question he throws into the conversation when he interviews a young man. He will say suddenly, "By the way, did you ever want to build a bridge?" If the young man makes no response and seems to assume that the question is stupid, he is dismissed. But if his face lights up and he says, "You know as a matter of fact, I've always wanted to build a bridge," he is taken at once. It is in that spirit that Jesus chose his disciples and calls men today.

Ecumenical Bridge

The church brings men together. If there is a church that tests my patience almost beyond the breaking point, it is the church that is self-consciously for the "best" people only. It is a sickening sight to see a church glory in its exclusiveness and pride itself on its aristocracy and wealth. This is to deny the real nature of the Church. Whatever weaknesses the ecumenical movement may have in our time, at least it is a symbol of an increasing desire on the part of the church to build bridges again. This "great new fact of our time," as the late Archbishop of Canterbury called it, is symbolizing for us the solution of the great problems of the generation. And if you travel about the world and become overwhelmed with so much that is wrong, you are lifted up with the Christian fellowship which is right. For it is bridging national, racial, and social barriers and is the earnest of that universal Kingdom wherein dwell peace and righteousness.

Chester Bowles, onetime ambassador to India,

GERALD KENNEDY, bishop of the Los Angeles Area of the Methodist Church, plans to use this sermon as a chapter in a new book to be published later this year. Others of his works include God's Good News, *a compilation of his Beecher lectures at Yale in 1954. Bishop Kennedy also delivered the Earl lectures at the Pacific School of Religion in 1948 and the Peyton lectures at Southern Methodist University in 1949. In November he returned from an episcopal visitation to South America.*

tells of an incident in the life of Gandhi. A young Communist came to see the old man to convert him to a more radical program. He spent an hour with Gandhi, but when he came out finally, he looked sheepish. "What fools we can be," he said. His friends inquired as to what had gone wrong. "Nothing," was the reply, "but that little man is the only true revolutionary in our country. We spend ourselves in talking and shouting, and he acts."[1] When Christians become the builders of roads and bridges, the Marxist idea begins to look pretty shallow and inadequate.

Symbol of America

There has come over our society what can hardly be described as less than a lust for security. We are afraid of communists, or ideas, or change, or controversy, or analysis, or facts. Too many people seem to be saying by their attitudes, "I have made up my mind. Do not confuse me with facts." That this change of attitude has come about at the very time of our greatest military strength is interesting, indeed.

Some years ago, my wife and I drove across the continent on our way to a seminary in New England. We stopped in Iowa to meet relatives, and visited the state capitol in Des Moines. I remember a large and dramatic picture of the pioneers in the hall, with this inscription: "The cowards never started, and the weaklings fell by the way." That was the spirit of the frontier and the strength of the conquest of the west. In southwest Colorado, two brothers established Bent's Fort. It was set in the midst of savage and unpredictable tribes of Indians, and it was face to face with a hostile Mexico. But the men who operated it preferred the danger and the adventure to the safety of the towns back east. And it was such men as these who won the continent and gave America its heritage.

Dr. Adolph Keller called on me one day. He is one of the pioneers of the ecumenical movement, a respected and beloved theologian and church leader of Europe. In the midst of our discussion, he looked up to a beautiful seascape which hangs on the wall of my office. It shows the waves rolling in and crashing on the rocks of the California shoreline. "That," said he, "is the symbol of America." He went on to say that the mountains, standing mighty majestic, quiet, are the symbol of Switzerland. But the restless power of the sea is the symbol of America. I did not tell him that this was not so true today as it had been in the past. We want to tie things down and make everything quiet, safe and dead.

Adventurous Faith

The Christian faith has been an adventurous faith. It has turned old customs upside down. It has sent its lonely spies into enemy territory to tell of a better country and a true King. It has not been afraid of truth and it has preached a divine discontent. It has challenged all the might of the world with a courage rooted in God.

We should not be surprised that this search for security has sometimes affected the church. We are prone to think of an institution as an end in itself instead of a means to a greater achievement. It is distressing to find so many churchmen who fear the criticism of the world and assume that to keep the church prosperous and comfortable is the end goal.

At least one denomination in our time has hesitated in bringing the United Nations before its people as a subject for discussion, because "it is controversial." When the church becomes frightened to consider any subject having to do with the welfare of people and the establishing of peace, it is a far cry from the fearless Christian pioneers who have made it a respected, vital influence in the forward march of civilization. Let her pray constantly that she may be "filled with the prophet's scorn of tyranny, and with a Christlike tenderness for the heavy-laden and downtrodden. Bid her cease from seeking her own life, lest she lose it."

One of India's influential figures is Vinoba Bhave, sometimes called the "walking saint." As a close follower of Gandhi, he remained very much in the background, but since his leader's death he has become known to millions for his work in encouraging a more equal distribution of land. He walks hundreds of miles a year visiting villages, to urge those who have more land than they need to share a few acres with the landless. He attacks the communist philosophy and strategy head-on and has become the center of a great spiritual movement with the most practical implications. He said one time, "If Gandhi had not died, how could I ever have dared to come forward?" One of his friends put it this way: "India needed him. God told him that the time for timidity had passed."[2]

[1]Chester Bowles, *Ambassador's Report* (New York: Harper, 1954). Used by permission.

[2]Hallam Tennyson, *Vinoba: India's Walking Saint* (New York: Doubleday, 1955). Used by permission.

Only Frustration

"JESUS wept." Touching sermons have been preached on this text, holding up the example of the Lord's tenderness. They may be quite true, but within the context it is hard to see that the emotion involved is any other than that of complete frustration. H. V. Morton once described certain holy scenes as "obliterated forever beneath the suffocating trappings of piety." This would seem to be an adequate description of Jesus's frustration at this point: his dearest friends and his own people doing their best to ignore the light which was right in front of them. They had so thoroughly permitted death to take over that they no longer recognized life eternal right in their midst.—*Edward N. West,* Meditations on the Gospel of St. John *(New York: Harper, 1955). Used by permission of the publisher.*

So to the Christians of this generation God is peaking and saying that the time for timidity is ast. We are to regain the initiative. We are to e adventurers for Jesus Christ.

Experimenters

There is a story of a Russian worker in a factory who heard that what they were making was aby carriages. He needed one and had no money purchase it, so he began to filch parts from all he departments of the factory to assemble them t home. But when he put together what he had llected, it turned out to be a machine gun instead f a baby carriage. Our world is like that and hen we put together what we hoped would make or peace, it turns out to be another instrument kill and destroy. Our experimentation has not een too successful and we need some experimenters who will try new combinations and different materials.

There has developed in our democratic society n inordinate respect for dead-level conformity. Ve see it in politics, where the successful politician dreads to be unusual or superior, as if he were a plague. He knows that the label "egghead" s the kiss of death, but all the name means is hat a man is intellectually inclined and interested n ideas and theories. Has the time come when American politics prefer the ignorant to the earned, the mediocre to the superior, or the econd-rate to the best?

In education, we must serve the masses, which is ine if we do not assume that the masses should et the standards of our life. To a frightening xtent we demand adjustment and conformity on he part of children in the public schools, as if we ould no longer find a place for the unusual student. Universities, in the minds of some people, ought to be propaganda factories with no place or controversy or disagreement. The movies now nd again try a brave experiment and produce picture appealing to cultivated tastes, but usually they grind out entertainment for the uneleated desires of the uneducated. Now the liquor people have taken a page from this approach, so hat the waitress suggests a cocktail before she akes the order. It is a clever approach, for it establishes the impression that everybody is doing it, and to refuse is to be different.

Faith to Follow Christ's Lead

The Christian is supposed to know "a more excellent way." He believes that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." If someone insists that the Christian way is impractical, then the obvious answer is that the practical ways we have been using have not worked. Maybe it is time to try experimenting in an endeavor to find spiritual answers to our problems. Maybe we ought to pioneer.

Then there are the brethren who are fond of pointing to Christians who are no better than non-Christians. It is usually a matter of comparing Christianity's worst with the world's best. But the real answer was given by C. S. Lewis. He said in effect that Miss Smith who is a Christian has a foul temper, while Mr. Jones, who is not a Christian and never goes to church, has an even temper. The issue, however, is that you do not know how much worse Miss Smith would be if she were not a Christian, and you do not know how much finer Mr. Jones would be if he were a Christian.

At least I know what Christ did for me, and to that I can bear witness. When I think how far short my poor life falls from what it ought to be, and what in my best moments I want it to be, it makes me despair. But then there comes to me a picture of what my life would have been without Jesus Christ, and I feel a great rejoicing and thanksgiving for his unspeakable gift. I want to say to every man that until you have tried the experiment of giving him a chance with your life you have merely scratched the surface of your possibilities.

Professor Nathaniel Micklem of England was in India one time and having observed a poor outcast woman toiling all day in the paddy fields under a hot sun, asked a missionary what such a person could understand of the Christian religion. "She understands," was the reply, "that Christ is stronger than the demons."[3] As he goes on to point out, she probably had never heard of Charles Wesley's hymn with the words:

> He breaks the power of canceled sin,
> He sets the prisoner free;
> His blood can make the foulest clean;
> His blood availed for me.

But she could understand the same experience which the words describe. Christians have experienced the power of Jesus Christ and they have faith to follow the One who was the Pioneer of Life wherever he may lead, and to do whatever he commands.

Sacristy Prayer

By Martin Luther

O DEAR Father in heaven, I am indeed unworthy of the office and ministry in which I am to make known Thy glory and nurture and to serve this congregation. But since Thou hast appointed me to be a pastor and teacher, and the people are in need of the teachings and the instructions, O be Thou my helper and let Thy holy angels attend me. Then if Thou art pleased to accomplish anything through me, to Thy glory and not to mine or to the praise of men, grant me, out of Thy pure grace and mercy, a right understanding of Thy Word and that I may, also, diligently perform it. O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Thou Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, send Thy Holy Spirit that he may work with me, yea, that he may work in me to will and to do through Thy divine strength according to Thy good pleasure. Amen.

[3]Nathaniel Micklem, *Ultimate Questions* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1955). Used by permission.

The Proof of Our Faith

By Halford E. Luccock

The disciples . . . found it as he had told them. Mark 14:16.

THIS is just an acidental detail in a narrative. As Jesus came up to Jerusalem, he evidently had what might be called today an "underground" —some dependable friends with whom he and his disciples might make contact and from whom they might get help. There is no moral or spiritual meaning of any sort in the simple statement.

Yet, as Horace Bushnell has said, the gospel is a gift to the imagination. As we bring our imagination up to these words, they spread out into all the nooks and corners of the map and the calendar. We do no violence to historical truth when we see in these words the interpretation of the experience of a great number of people, in all the centuries and all over the earth, who, like the disciples back in Jerusalem, took seriously what Jesus told them. They *have* gone out into life and found it as he told them. They *have* found that his reading of life was valid, that his assurance of what would happen has worked out as he told them it would. On that assurance rests part, at least, of Jesus' claim to the allegiance and following of men.

But many will say, and have said for centuries, "That is not *true!* Life does not work out as Jesus said. The facts are against it." Someone remarked of the arid philosophical mind of Herbert Spencer that his only conception of tragedy was "the murder of a beautiful theory by a gang of brutal facts." Many have a similar feeling today, that our world's gang of brutal facts—and it is a large and brutal gang, all right—has murdered the beautiful theories of Jesus. It is a natural feeling. Eve Curie expressed it vividly when, during World War II, after visiting Jerusalem she looked back at the towers of Zion. She recalls that she felt like saying, "Ah, Jesus, so powerful and yet so powerless! You told us to be kind and forgiving, and yet for twenty solid centuries, wretched, incorrigible men have gone on being merciless, full of violence and hatred. Religious men and atheists alike have lived and ruled in a non-Christian way, and look at us now! We've never been in a worse mess!"

Yet, for the most part, such denials of Jesus' affirmations about life have come from people who have never really listened to what he said. He never said that life would be easy. He said plainly, "In the world you have tribulation." "You will be dragged before governors and kings . . . you will be hated by all for my sake." He said, "Follow me!" But the one thing in the world he seemed to be afraid of was getting followers under misunderstandings. He spoke of the costs of following him with a frankness which has never been matched by any leader of men.

No False Promises

Now the gospel *is* in a real sense a Cinderella story. It is a "success story" to this extent, that "the very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner." Jesus was rejected by the religious leaders of his time, by the teachers, by the political figures, by the economic rulers. His truth in a real way has become the head of the corner in each of the realms which rejected him. But the gospel is not a Horatio Alger "success story." It is no Hollywood Class B romance. If it had been merely a success story, telling people how to get through life in passive peace and poise, if it had had at its center no cross, it would have been buried centuries ago in the rubble of the ancient world. For it would have had nothing to say to a world in the midst of tragedy or to an individual in disaster.

In regard to this truth it should be clearly seen that the most vicious attacks on Christianity in our day are not coming from open enemies or disbelievers, but from those superficial interpreters who have warped and mangled the gospel with a cross at its center into a set of Six Easy Lessons on How to Be a Big, Booming Success. Or on How to Charm Your Worries Away with Pink Thoughts. Our gospel did not come into the world with a fixed, silly grin on its face, and some light, "Be good and you'll be happy" chatter. Jesus is being wounded worst of all by those of his own disciples who are distorting a message of redemption into a vapid "Cheerio."

But with these misconceptions cleared, look at the record of life. People who have acted on Jesus' word have found it as he told them. The experi-

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HALFORD E. LUCCOCK spoke to overflow audiences in Marquand Chapel as the 1953 Beecher lecturer, a few weeks before he retired from Yale Divinity School where he had taught preaching for a quarter-century. Communicating the Gospel *is the published version of these lectures. Others of his works include several volumes of sermons;* The Story of Methodism, *written in collaboration with Paul Hutchinson; and* Like a Mighty Army, *a collection of his sprightly columns that appear in the* Christian Century *over the signature Simeon Stylites.*

ace of living by faith in Christ has brought its vn verification of his teaching, a fundamental d enduring evidence of the truth of his revetion.

One of the greatest liabilities of life is that of rejudgment before any trial has begun, with a ind as closed as if it were set in concrete. That true in any realm. We see it, in a strange byath in the history of science, in the rejection of alileo's discovery of the satelites of Jupiter. A -called astronomer of Florence, Sizzi, disposed the claim of Galileo in a brief which deserves mmortality. He argued that because there were even openings in the heads of men, two eyes, two ostrils, two ears and a mouth, and seven metals, nd seven days of the week, there must be only even planets, or else, as he pointed out, crushngly, "the whole beautiful system falls to the round." Instead of looking at the evidence, he as playing a nice little game of Seven Up. It is poor game of prejudgment, whether in the 16th entury or the 20th, whether in science or religion.

One of the earliest invitations to discipleship as, "Come and See." It is still a good one. Look t a few things which Jesus told men.

Inner Security

He said, "In me you may have peace." And men ave found it as he told them. Not the placid surace of a stagnant pond; not the serene career of contented cauliflower. But the deep, inner seurity of a life amid turmoil, unafraid with any mazement. Here is the testimony of one of the rst persons who found it that way, "I am sure hat neither death, nor life . . . nor things present, or things to come . . . nor anything else in all reation, will be able to separate us from the love f God." He had touched dependable rock. But e do not have to go back to the first century for vidence like that. A short time ago, in the stacks f a library, I picked up a book at random looking or something else, and read this dedication: "To y mother and sister, whose bodies were defeated n the battle against painful disease, but who, rom that defeat wrested a spiritual victory which hallenged all who knew them, and made glad the eart of God." That may seem an extreme case. But the word of Jesus can pass the test of exremes.

This peace of God is not like a rare flower, to e found only in a conservatory. It is more like hollyhock; it will grow anywhere. Most of us, hank God, have seen it growing. There is somehing great here, which we may easily miss: a reat inheritance. We are "heirs of God and fellow eirs with Christ." But we may be missing heirs, vho have never really claimed or received the egacy of peace which is rightfully ours. We are eirs by relationship to God, and "if children, then eirs." Ours may be the inner security of God's ons and daughters in a home.

Again, Jesus said, "He who finds his life will ose it." And who that looks at life carefully can doubt that the surest way to lose life in its largest possibilities is painfully to try to preserve it? The best preserved thing in all history is an Egyptian mummy. The surest way to make a mummy out of yourself is to give all your attention to preserving life. That truth comes with great pertinence to a generation which seems to have lifted up its soul to preserving. We try to preserve our looks. The beauty parlor business has become one of our major industries. We have made a religion out of preserving our money. Jesus' word shows that we can preserve life in the lowest sense by escape; we can escape burdens and sacrifices. But by doing so escape life itself, in the largest meaning of the word.

How Poor We Are!

Many years ago Rudyard Kipling was giving a commencement address at McGill University. In the midst of the familiar warnings against preoccupation with wealth and fame, he said, "Some day you will meet a man who cares for none of these things, and then you will know how poor you are." As he said those words, they were prophecy. But they are also history. Centuries ago, there lived a Man who cared for none of these things. And, as multitudes have met him, they have known how poor they were.

That is the great hazard of living, that by saving our lives we shall miss life in its largest potential. Some time ago I was laid up with grippe in bed, and could not reach anything to read except one of my wife's magazines, *Better Homes and Back Yards,* or something like that. I learned about all the latest kitchen gadgets and the do-it-yourself delusions. In one article there was some psychological advice about not worrying, taking one day at a time, etc. I remember one sentence, "Whittle life down to your size." I said to myself, "That is not something out of the horse's mouth, but right out of the devil's mouth." That is what the man known as the Rich Young Ruler in the Gospels did. He "whittled life down to his size"—the size of a few acres and some livestock. Pigmy size! We are great whittlers! Life can be whittled down till it is like one of those little ships inside a bottle. I have read of one woman who read a novel, *East Lynne,* when she was a young girl. She liked it so much that she never read another novel all her life. So there are persons who read only one book, *The Life of John Jones,* that is, himself, or *The Life of Petunia Jones,* that is, herself. They become immersed in that Lilliputian epic and never really look at anything else. They do not ask to be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. All they ask is to be pushed in a perambulator, with a child's portion of responsibility and effort. Do not whittle life down to your size. Let God lift you up to the size for which he made you.

Power From Above

Jesus said, "You shall receive power." And men have found it as he told them. The words which were cried out in the first Christian generation, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me," have been repeated through all the years. There have been enhanced lives, empowered people,

through the strange lifting force of a new object of devotion, a new faith and a new set of ideas.

I once saw in the Panama Canal a sight which seemed to me a true symbol of this fact of history. A ship was in the Gatun Locks. It would have to be lifted up to a great height if it were to go on with the voyage. The concrete walls of the lock rose above the ship like a skyscraper. How could it ever get up there? One thing did *not* happen. The engineer on the ship did not signal, "Full steam ahead! Everybody lift!" That would have done no good. The man in the control room on the lock quietly pushed a button and let in the water from Chagres Lake, high up in the mountains. The flow of power from above lifted the ship and sent it out on a new level. That is only a faint picture of what has happened in millions of lives, and what can happen in any life. The gift of the grace of God, the gift of power for living, can lift life and send it out on a new level.

Jesus said that he would be a disturber of loyalties. He said, "I am come to set a man at variance with his father and a daughter with her mother." Of course, Jesus has been the inspirer of great loyalties. But he has been a saving disturber of loyalties, detaching the emotions from one object and attaching them to larger ones. That is one of the world's deepest needs, disturbed loyalties. Our world is blighted with loyalty to muddled thinking, to petrified tradition, to sanctified stupidity; loyalty to the provincialism of clan and race. The world's hope is that men may be lifted out of partial loyalties into one high allegiance, the Kingdom of God.

The Only Way

Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." There are no statistics on that. But there is the multiplied experience of the way that the Christlike God fits into the needs of the human mind and heart. That has given to hosts of people the conviction that "God stooping, showed us enough of himself for us to live by." Faith is still a venture. The mind and heart of man respond to the revelation of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is Katherine Mansfield writing in a casual letter, "God is now gone for all of us. Yet we *must* believe. And not only that, we *must* carry our weakness, our sin and our devilishness to somebody." Notice the musts. That is the voice of one woman. But it is the human race speaking. A man looking down from the top of the Empire State building in New York, seeing the people like little midges on the sidewalk one hundred stories below, not as large as ants, said, "I guess that's the way the world looks to God." That is not the way God sees men. Jesus gives us another view. Here is the way the world looks to God:

> There were ninety and nine that safely lay
> In the shelter of the fold,
> But one was out on the hills away . . .

The searching God, for one person!

We are not digits in a column. That faith has lifted men to their feet. That is something to sing about. So we sing about it, "O Love that will not let me go."

We are finding things in the social and international world as Jesus told us. A long time ago in a far, far simpler world than ours, Jesus said, "I am the way." Today in a world in which man has outrun by far the sound of his own voice, in which he has achieved the power to destroy himself and his world, we can see more clearly than ever that he is the only way. There is no other name given whereby men may find survival than that which is given in Christ Jesus.

Fine Lines

From a Prayer by Walter W. Bloesch

St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church
Crystal Lake, Illinois

SO often we fool ourselves into believing that our lives have direction when they have only a limited goal. We believe that because we are busy we are accomplishing much good, and because we are under tension we are living a purposeful life. Help us to see that all of this temporal hustle and bustle has no meaning or purpose at all except as it is rooted in eternal realities except as life finds its source and its hope in Thee the everlasting God, and the Christ whom Thou didst send. . . .

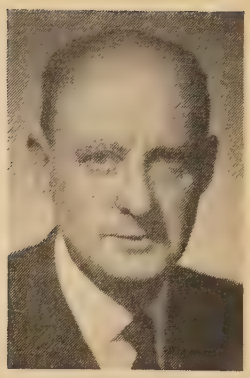
O God our Father we covet Thy help for everyone. . . . We pray for individuals caught in circumstances that are not their fault, and which might well be our circumstances were it not for Thy grace. Be with those who find life trying, and who are tempted to despair. Be with those who imagine that they are surrounded by trouble and misfortune but who need only look into their own hearts to know that surrounding even that is the love of God. . . .

Portrait Gallery

I REGARD the great theologies and confessions of the past as a vast portrait gallery, where the paintings by various artists are all of the selfsame Person. The artists belong to many generations. They think the thoughts, they use the idiom, each of his own age. Origen and Irenaeus, Augustine of Hippo and John of Damascus, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura, Luther and Calvin, Jonathan Edwards and Horace Bushnell, Schleiermacher and Karl Barth—how they differ among themselves if we consider technically their various propositions! Yet each of them has painted Christ as he sees him. Not all the portraits are equally good, but all are recognizable; nor need we doubt that if we have time to study all these portraits, we shall know more of Christ than if we pay attention to one only.—*Nathaniel Micklem*, Ultimate Questions *(Nashville: Abingdon). Used by permission of the publisher.*

w Shows Us Up to Love, Which
uts Us Up to the Law

Love and Law



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By Reinhold Niebuhr

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:17.

THIS text is the Johannine version of the well known Pauline distinction between grace and w, between the message of the New Testament .d the Old Testament. We are not immediately ncerned with the claims of the superiority of iristianity as a religion of grace over Judaism a religion of law. That distinction may not do stice to elements of grace implied in the conption of the Jewish "Torah," nor to the fact at the Old Testament contains both the law and e prophets. It is not our concern to emphasize e sharpness of the distinction between Judaism id Christianity but rather to raise the question hy a faith which is so sharply antilegalistic in rinciple, should so perennially harden into a raceless legalism. The faith which began with aul's insistence on grace rather than law as the strument of redemption, came in time to be most identical with a highly developed system laws; and even of two forms of legalism, the ne, the monastic one, giving more security of demption to the anxious soul by the greater verity of its moral and religious discipline.

The Reformation is universally regarded, at ast by Protestants, as having restored the orighal gospel emphasis upon grace, rather than law, nd to have been a new emancipation from the lea of redemption through the law. "For freedom hrist has set us free; stand fast therefore," it roclaimed in the spirit of St. Paul. But we know hat the common observer today, as in previous ays, knows the "God-fearing" man by the rigor f his discipline. If that means an upright life, proves that the fruits of the spirit are not only love, joy and peace" but justice and honesty and very form of moral order. But that is not what he common observer sees in the religious life of ne Protestant churches. He sees what one not nfriendly critic has defined as "a group of conentional people who are addressed once a week y a conventional little man who seeks to persuade nem to become more conventional." He sees the galism of conventionality, which at its best embodies some of the cherished discipline of life, particularly in the institution of the family. But at its worst, it seems just another and less rigorous way of proving yourself better than the neighbor and of quieting the uneasy conscience by a meticulous concern for some code of respectability. It is frequently lacking the freedom and the joy which are the "fruits of the spirit."

If we desire to analyze the causes of this perennial drift of a religion of grace to a religious legalism we may well begin our task by defining what the prologue of the Johannine Gospel meant by the phrase, "Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Both Righteous and Merciful

The "truth" in Christ is, in modern parlance, "existential." The gospel asserts that in the drama of Christ's life, death and resurrection, the final and definitive truth was given to man about both God and man. The truth about God was the clarification of the mystery of the relation of his mercy and forgiveness to his justice or his "wrath." In the suffering of the Savior, it was revealed that God took the sins of the world upon himself. The gospel came into the world with the tremendous affirmation that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." All theories of the Atonement try to explain this ultimate paradox in the mystery of the divine, that God is at the same time both righteous and merciful, that his righteousness and his mercy are two sides of his love, and that the two sides both complement and contradict one another.

The "truth" about man which is revealed in the cross of Christ is that, ultimately considered, only the loving mercy and not any moral striving can bridge the chasm between divine holiness and the sinful goodness of men. They must strive to fulfill the "law of Christ which is the law of love." But the cross reveals the best of men to be involved in the crucifixion and proves all human virtues, even on the highest levels, to be ambiguous. Religious legalism is a conscious or unconscious effort to obscure this rather embarrassing truth about all of us.

This "good news" of the gospel did not come out of the blue. It was prepared for by ages of longing that the justice of God which made man's conscience afraid would be matched by his mercy, and by the questions of how the two were related

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to each other. It was also prepared for by abortive efforts of generations of men to make themselves worthy to appear before the final court, efforts which led either to self-deception or to agonized disappointment. The good news was that we need not bridge the hiatus between divine perfection and our human imperfection by our striving for perfection. The disturbing implication was that we can not; and that every effort to do so is bound to betray some of the corruption of self-concern which it ostensibly tried to overcome. We are not to be anxious about ourselves, even about our status before the divine Judge who desires honesty and freedom from self-deception more than frantic striving. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Grace, according to the gospel, is therefore freedom from the law and from the terrors of the unkept law. It is the freedom from anxiety about ourselves in the final court. Therefore, the fruits of grace as the fruits of the spirit are "love, joy and peace."

Freedom from Self

The inevitable question arises which was put to St. Paul: "Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" Is not this assurance of pardon an invitation to relax all moral discipline? Is there not a creative power in the uneasy conscience? St. Paul answers, "By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" Real grace in other words means not only freedom from the terrors of the law but freedom from self. The response to the divine love is love; and that love is the fulfillment of the law. Freedom from self means that a conduct is possible which exceeds the requirements of the law.

We have much evidence in the whole of life and many analogies for this truth that freedom over the law does not mean freedom from the law, but represents a plus, in which the disciplines of the law are transcended.

We speak of the grace or gracefulness of a good athlete, a skater or tennis player for instance. The freedom and gracefulness of his movements is possible only if he has fully mastered the basic disciplines of his form of physical art. The grace of an artist, say of a violinist, expresses itself in the freedom to interpret a composition imaginatively after the disciplines of the art have been fully mastered. The graciousness of a hostess does not mean freedom from the conventions of civility but freedom over them in the imagination and selflessness with which the hostess meets her guests.

But these analogies may be less revealing than the actual realities in the moral and spiritual life. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" and does not therefore mean freedom not to observe the law. Love transcends all the details of the law in meeting the needs of the neighbor. But it is significant that if love is a law, it is not one which can be fulfilled by the power of the "ought." Surely the psychiatrists are right when they criticize Christian legalism for presenting essentially selfish people with the demand as a duty that they must love their fellowmen. There is no power in the sense of duty to compel attitudes of love. These can flow only from the power of grace. The child is free to love because it has been given the security of being loved. The soldier sacrifices his life for a comrade not out of a sense of duty but because he has been bound to his buddy by the *esprit de corps* of his outfit. That is also the common cause of his courage to meet the perils of the battlefield. He may have individual resources of courage beyond these communal ones. But the communal ones are very important. In any case, even the army, which is not supposed to know anything about grace beyond the disciplines which it administers, does not remain unconscious of the mysteries of grace. If it gives the soldier a medal for heroism, it cites him for bravery "beyond the call of duty." It knows, in other words, of a realm of grace which the "ought" is powerless to attain.

We have given these examples from the realm of what Christian thought defines as "common grace." It might be worth observing that the efficacy of common grace in all the relations of life makes it quite pretentious for those who have a knowledge of the fact of grace to claim a monopoly or even a superiority in the fruits of grace. In the case of forgiving love, which is clearly a fruit of the grace of contrition and an absence of self-righteousness, the "publicans and sinners" are clearly in the Kingdom of God more surely than self-righteous "saints." We can, in fact, not make any claims of perfection in the name of grace; for the "wind blows where it wills" and the gift of grace, being a gift, is not subject to strenuous human striving.

Continuing Need for Forgiveness

But to make love at once the triumph of grace over law and the triumph over self, if taken too simply, would guarantee perfection as the fulfillment of the law and would leave out of account what the Reformation so strongly emphasized: that the saints as well as the sinners are in need of divine forgiveness, and that forgiveness is not merely the initial stage in the drama of salvation. We need forgiveness as much at the end as at the beginning of the striving for moral goodness. Why? The simple answer to that question is that it is impossible either to eradicate the persistent self-concern of all people, including good people, or to regard this self-concern as harmless. Some critics, particularly psychiatric critics, regard Christianity as too pessimistic in assuming the persistence of self-love. They think it could be eliminated by a proper technic of analysis or education. Others regard Christianity as too pessimistic in defining self-love as harmless.

The first criticism is certainly wrong. It does not take account of the radical character of human freedom and the corresponding capacity to use it for the self on every level. The second criticism

ust be taken seriously, at least provisionally, ecause self-regard may be comparatively harmss when it is merely an incidental corruption of life which is creatively devoted to the commuity and to values beyond itself. Certainly it is etter to accept a residue of such self-regard than o try to eradicate it by measures which almost nvariably lead to more preoccupation with the lf.

Grace Is Our Redemption

The "self is like an onion from which it is ossible to peel off layer upon layer," said a great ystic. One might add that the self is indeed like n onion in another way; for the more layers you eel off by conscious contrivance, the more punent the vegetable becomes. There is no chance f triumphing over the self in this way. The only edemption from the prison house of self is by ubmitting to every form of grace, saving and ommon, by which the self is drawn out of itself n the worship of God in responsibilities and creive functions, in the love of others and in service o the community. The residual self-regard which emains in all these creative and graceful activiies must not be regarded as harmless. It may corupt many a relationship. But neither must there e a morbid impulse to get rid of it. Rather it must, ultimately considered, be humbly confessed hat it may be forgiven, confessed to the fellowmen and to God. Thus grace is our redemption, whether grace means the freedom which rests upon the power to do good or the freedom from an uneasy conscience which comes from the pardon of acknowledged self-concern.

It is surprising how similar are the conclusions of the Christian faith and the wisest of the psychiatric approaches to this problem and how different and contradictory are the conclusions of a legalistic religion and the best science. The assumed contrast between psychiatry and the Christian faith rests upon the assumption by both many Christians and many psychiatrists that Christianity is a legalistic system which "commands" selfish men to be unselfish. There is indeed a "thou shalt" in the love commandment in the sense that only love is the true norm for human freedom. But biblical faith leaves us in no confusion on the fact that this norm can not be fulfilled under the push of "ought," but by the "pull" of grace, divine grace and the grace which is mediated by the love of those who care for us.

But, one will ask, is this view of the matter not degenerating the function and the power of moral obligation too much? Does this view of grace not relax the moral discipline of life? Is Brunner right when he declares, "If I feel that I ought, this proves that I am powerless to do it." In answer to that question one must say that Brunner—possibly St. Paul himself—is rather too negative toward the function of the law, both in defining our duties and internally, that is, in the power of moral obligation. We can and must do many things in obedience to duty and in defiance of inclination: get up in the morning, for instance, to do the day's work; be just to the person we do not like; and perform a vexatious but necessary task. We can even do some good to our fellowmen in so-called "acts of charity" which are not prompted by love at all but by an uneasy conscience and a sense of duty. There is a large field for the operation of law in human life, both in internal terms, that is in the power of the sense of obligation, and in social terms, that is in the definition of what is good; and in coercing us to do the good against our momentary inclinations.

But there are heights to which law can not rise; law can not compel the selfish heart to love his fellowman. It can not persuade us to forgive an erring brother. That power can come only by the grace of humility and the sense of our common involvement in human sin. It is therefore impossible for a self-righteous man, whether he be religious or irreligious. Nor can the law compel, or even prompt, us to sacrifice ourselves for anyone. That is a height of love which is purely a fruit of grace. The law has its rightful place in the moral and spiritual economy of life on its lower levels. But it is a source of confusion when it is used as a means of redemption. Thus used, it becomes an instrument either for the purpose of proving and revealing the goodness of man, of his worthiness in the ultimate court, or of hiding the ambiguity of human morality and the mixture of motives to the self so that it will not feel the need of redemption. In short, it is the instrument by which man tries to redeem himself.

Limitations upon the Law

This motive of legalism gives us the clue to the persistence of the drift toward the law from grace throughout all human history. Obedience to the law is the final way of man's proving himself worthy to himself and to his fellowmen, to quiet the uneasy conscience and to refute the idea, which all human conduct betrays, that man is not strong or good enough to do good. "I bear them witness," declares St. Paul, in speaking of the legalists of his day, "that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified."

When the conformity to law is made the instrument for evading the ultimate issue and escaping the ultimate court, in which the mixture of motives in all human actions is proved, and the powerlessness of the sense of duty to compel the final goodness is obscured, it obviously has the purpose of veiling the unworthiness of man rather than stripping him naked of his pretenses. It is the means of man's final self-deception. That is reason enough for Paul's rigorous attitude toward religious legalism which has shocked so many but not shocked the Christian community enough to prevent the constant drift toward the law. Thus the difference between the law as an instrument of proximate good, of justice and order and the law

in the economy of redemption, must be sharply affirmed. And the law in the second sense, as an escape from the realm of grace and as an assertion of man's moral self-sufficiency, must be rejected. That rejection, so implicit in the gospel, however falls in judgment upon much of our religious life, whether Protestant or Catholic.

We are sometimes inclined to attribute legalism to the Calvinist rather than the Lutheran tradition of Protestantism. But the legalism of religious conventionality is all-pervasive. Two books, one by Hawthorne in the 18th century and one by a Scandinavian-American writer in the 20th century, will illustrate the point. The one, *The Scarlet Letter,* protests against the graceless legalism of New England Puritanism. The other, *Giants of the Earth,* portrays the scarcely less graceful conventionality of the Lutheran culture of our own northwest. In both cases an unforgiving spirit on the part of the religiously righteous is the final fruit of the legalism. It has not absorbed the meaning of the parable of the unmerciful servant nor heeded the injunction, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Meticulous Self-Discipline

Religious legalism could be divided into two main categories. The first comprises a meticulous legalism designed to obscure the fact that the self is evading the law of love. This kind of legalism is manifest in meticulous Sabbatarianism, prudery in sex, and possibly a prohibition of every dubious form of entertainment. It was initially justified by the licentiousness of the stage, but it persists even now as a form of discipline which does not challenge the self-centered self essentially. It establishes standards which, while difficult to obey, do not really deal with the central issue of the self's conflict between the law of love and its self-love. It is significant that this legalism supplanted the older evangelicalism in the 19th century when Christians were tempted to evade the law of love on the race issue. There seemed no better way of hiding the fact that you did not love your brother even to the point of granting him elementary justice than by proving how righteous you were in keeping the Sabbath and in keeping yourself "unstained from the world." There is still a wide prevalence of this kind of legalism in American Protestantism. It is on the whole graceless and does not compare favorably with the various forms of common grace which flourish in the best forms of secularism. It may not be altogether bereft of the grace of love and forgiveness; but when it is, it becomes very graceless indeed. Though we may condemn this legalism, we Christians are all more involved in it than we imagine. We do not "tithe mint and rue." We are not as meticulous as that; but whenever we try to do a little thing well in order to hide the fact that we are not doing the big thing at all, we are enmeshed in legalism.

It should be noted that there is always a competitive element in legalistic righteousness. "We try to establish our own righteousness," in the words of Paul. And we try to prove our comparative moral superiority over someone else. This competitive element is very important because there is always someone who is less disciplined than we are. Therefore the simplest way of quieting an uneasy conscience is to maintain a standard of righteousness which is comparatively superior to that of another group. This competitive righteousness leaves the Pauline warning out of account: "Why do you pass judgment on your brother? . . . We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God." Ultimately the Christian faith deals not with the nicely calculated less and more of human righteousness but with the encounter which all men have with God in the ultimate court.

Law of Love Is Complicated

The second type of Christian legalism is one with which we are all familiar and in which we have probably grown up. It knows the inadequacies of a meticulous legalism, of Sabbatarianism and prudery. It insists on Jesus' injunction, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." It knows, in short, that love is the final law. It presents Jesus as the perfect lawgiver and his life as the perfect example. It is therefore rightfully regarded as superior to the lower form of legalism. But it suffers from two great deficiencies. It does not know that we can not love as a duty but only by grace, that is by gifts of power given to us by God and our fellowmen rather than by our own power or the sense of obligation. Secondly, it does not know that even at best we can not perfectly fulfill the law of love because we remain selfish to the end. St. Paul's dictum, "Through the law comes knowledge of sin," applies with particular force to the law of love. That is the final law of our being, and it is precisely this law which condemns all of us. It was surely this law which St. Paul had in mind when he said, "I delight in the law of God after the inward mind; but there is a law in my members

The Lord of Years

TAKING our flesh, He chose to walk the round
Of years, with us clad in such fragile dress;
He chose to hear with our sense the sound
Of man in storm, of childhood in distress.
The Lord of Time became subject to sun
And moon, the cycle of men's tasks. The Light
Endured the winter's dimness and was done
To noontide death for the approaching night.
Eternal, He became a part of years,
Beginningless, he chose to have beginning—
And through the mystery of His hour and choice
He grants still grace to make joy of old tears,
To turn to Him from all our old year's sinning
And speak His new good with our new year's voice.

SIEGMUND A. E. BETZ.

hich wars against the law that is in my mind." Any modern legalism which regards the law of e as a simple possibility and thinks it can be lfilled if only it is stated persuasively and obeyed th real fervor, does not understand that part the gospel which searches the human heart and scovers the sinful and self-loving man in need grace both to fulfill the law and to be pardoned cause he can not fulfill it. To make the law of ve into a simple possibility means that it also comes an instrument for evading the necessity grace. It even becomes an instrument of comtitive righteousness. "Look," declares the righteous man, "I am better than you. I love my fellowmen so perfectly that I can not involve myself in ne sin of defending my neighbor against the ggressor or against the evil man who would enslave him." All responsibility for the community, for the safety of loved ones, for the preservation of civilization, is disavowed for the sake of ne individual's perfection, for the purpose of eeping him unspotted from the world.

This kind of legalism may be prompted by the onest illusion that it can shame the evil man into oodness, or by the false hope that history is in he process of gradually substituting "methods of orce" with "methods of love." But there is no doubt another motive, the same motive which rompted the monastic life in the Middle Ages. That motive is to purchase perfection at the price f responsibility. What is true in this approach is he conviction that a measure of guilt is involved n the exercise of all responsibilities. But love is lso involved in these loyalties and responsibilities. Therefore the disavowal of responsibility for the ake of the law of love means a disavowal of the ove involved in responsibility. It would obviously e better not to be so concerned with the perfection of the self that the self may be free to think of he plight of the neighbor. In short, the new legalism, which makes love a law without grace, seems s preoccupied with the self's moral prestige as he old legalism. Its fruits prove that it is fatal for he self to be concerned with its prestige, even with its prestige for goodness.

Gospel of Grace Must Be Restored

The law has its own uses in the ordering of the human community and in the discipline of the individual. But it is not an instrument of salvation, ultimately considered. Ultimately every fact of experience proves the simple gospel affirmations about the supremacy of grace to be true. We need both the power and the pardon of divine grace. We are not free to do good by our own resources and finally we are not good at all. The contradiction between man and God can not be healed by any human contrivance. If the attempt is made, religion produces not the fruits of the spirit—not love, joy and peace—but a frantic self-righteousness and a confusing self-deception.

It is clear that among the many problems which we face as a church, as a community of grace, is perennially to restore the gospel of grace against the inroads of legalism. For every form of religious legalism is but another effort of man to hide the ambiguity of his virtue, the impotence of his will, the fragmentariness of his life and the ultimate need in which he stands, no matter what his achievements may be. There are significant distinctions between good and evil men; and there are important disciplines of law, internally and externally, which preserve human life from chaos. But ultimately, that is in God's sight, the Christian faith is corrupted if it does not disclose to proud men that they are in need of grace, both as power to do the good they ought to do and as pardon because they never will be good; "For no man living is righteous before" God.

Emil Brunner believes that law represents the hard shell in which the inner kernel of love is guarded and protected. But there is another way of presenting the relation of grace to law. Law is in the dimension represented by personal decisions and discriminations. In this sphere conscious rectitude is dominant. But this dimension of law depends upon the foundation of grace. Grace means all the gifts of saving and common grace by which our virtues and good intentions are inspired, upheld, and purified. In this sphere one must always ask St. Paul's grateful question: "What have you that you did not receive?"

Prayer: We thank Thee, our Father, for every force of grace which strengthens our weak will and helps us to do what we ought; but above all we thank Thee for the grace of Thy forgiveness which takes our sins upon Thyself and bridges the chasm between Thy holiness and our unrighteousness which no virtue of ours can bridge. We thank Thee for the truth and the grace which has been made manifest in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Loyalty in Worship

I HAPPEN to believe that in cold, realistic, practical terms, the best hope for world civilization lies in the Christian church. Despite its divisions, its stuffiness, its slowness, its enslavement to nationalistic prejudices, social conservatism and rigid dogma; the church is mankind's most effective instrument for opening channels of understanding, for restoring mutual confidence, for instilling contrition, for allaying anxiety, and for opposing fanatical will-to-power. To a generation groping for some world-wide basis for justice, we *must* say: "A world society already exists. It *is* possible for men to find a loyalty which takes precedence over everything that divides them into warring groups. It *is* possible for men to relinquish their own narrow interests for the sake of a community which surmounts distinctions of race, nation and class. That loyalty and that community are found where men are drawn together in the worship of Jesus Christ."—*David E. Roberts,* The Grandeur and Misery of Man *(New York: Oxford University Press, 1955). Used by permission.*

The Century of the Great Reconciliation

By G. Bromley Oxnam

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. II Corinthians 5:17-19.

WHITTAKER Chambers, once a key figure in the Communist conspiracy as well as an editor of *Time* magazine and later a decisive factor in the conviction of Alger Hiss, was quoted in a recent *Facts Forum* article as having written:

> It is idle to talk about preventing the wreck of Western civilization. It is already a wreck from within. That is why we can hope to do little more now than to snatch a fingernail of a saint from the rack or a handful of ashes from the faggots, and bury them secretly in a flower pot against the day, ages hence, when a few men begin again to dare to believe that there was once something else, that something else is thinkable, and need some evidence of what it was, and the fortifying knowledge that there were those who, at the great nightfall, took loving thought to preserve the tokens of hope and truth.

This is a morbid summons to return to the caves, to make ready for "the great nightfall." We reject and repudiate the migraine message of the intellectual quitters whose cringing spirit is satisfied by burying a fingernail, a handful of ashes, in a flower pot. Is there none among us who dares hold "that something else is thinkable," none to believe? Has this ceased to be "our Father's world"?

The 15th century was the century of the Intellectual Revolution. The new learning emerged, the Renaissance; man experienced "the glory of the lighted mind." The 16th century was the century of the Religious Revolution. Intellectual honesty expressed itself in the Protestant Reformation, and man rejoiced in "the glory of the lighted soul." The 17th century was the century of the Social Revolution, the seismic shock that brought to rubble a system that assumed kings ruled by divine right, that a society of nobles and of serfs was ordained of God, and to question it was blasphemy. The 18th century was the century of the Political Revolution, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the earlier English Revolution. Men talked of government of the people, by the people, and for the people; they held that government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. The 19th century was the century of the Industrial Revolution, the coming of the steam driven machine, the beginning of the capitalist era.

And the question? What is the 20th century to be called? The "great nightfall"? The century of Collective Homicide? Is civilization to be cremated in the fires of a hydrogen blast? Call me naive, unrealistic—but I dare to affirm the belief that this will be called the century in which man abolished war, established economic justice, and realized racial brotherhood. It will be the century in which man learned how to live together. The century of the Great Reconciliation, the century in which man was reconciled to God, and got right with his brother.

Reconciliation of Man and God

The first issue in the world struggle involves one's world view. Our faith determines what we live for and what we are willing to die for. What is your faith?

The Apostle Paul said, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." I am not a theologian. I hold the theologian in profound respect. I am sure the faith must be undergirded by sound theology. I have been through the courses, have read somewhat extensively in theology, and have witnessed the parades of erudition at ecumenical conferences; I bow in respect but confess I am not an active member of the lodge or of the fraternity. I know the grip, have been instructed concerning the password, and might possibly be able to work my way into the meeting, but I am not a theologian.

I may be wrong, but for me religion really takes off where philosophical speculation ends. The late Archbishop of Canterbury said wisely, "Religion does not consist in supposing that there is a God; it consists in personal trust in God rising to personal fellowship with God." Hence, we deal with affirmation, not argument. I do not mean for a

G. BROMLEY OXNAM, bishop of the Washington area of the Methodist Church, formerly held the same position in the Omaha, Boston and New York areas. He has served as president of both the Federal and World councils of churches, as mediator on the National War Labor Board and as member of governmental advisory committees. Author, editor, lecturer and educator, he used "Preaching in a Revolutionary Age" as title of his 1944 Beecher lectures.

pment to summon you to blind trust, but I stress e fact of trust. This is faith. We must trust and en thrust our lives forward in terms of the ith. It is apparent to any thoughtful man that ere is a range of power exhibited in nature ided by perfect intelligence. To quote Archshop Temple again, "We cannot any longer hesite in supposing that behind the world of nature ere is at work a power, guided by principles such those which appear also in our own minds. The o correspond." Religion holds that the power on which the world depends, guided by perfect telligence, is the source of moral aspiration and s a sense of duty. The supreme power is rightus. This means that God is a morally obligated ing or, as Browning put it, "The All Great is e All Loving, too." There is a sense of obligaon in human nature.

Reinhold Niebuhr suggests that "religion is the lf's commitment to some system of meaning, or s loyalty to some scheme of values." To me, it is ore; it is commitment to the God revealed by esus; and in Christian terms, it is commitment Christ himself, since the Christian faith has ways held that God was in Christ, reconciling e world unto himself; that as Jesus said, "I and e Father are one." It is truly becoming a new an in Christ Jesus.

The first of the crucial issues lies in this queson. Can you say with intellectual honesty, "I elieve in God the Father Almighty"? Do you beeve this is our Father's world; that the Eternal, ho keeps the stars in their courses, notes the parrow's fall; that God's love is not an imperonal love for mankind in general but for me in articular; that man's relation to God is personal, irect, immediate? Are you committed to the roposition that nothing can separate a man from e love of God which is in Christ Jesus? If you old this, it follows that in all matters affecting our eternal welfare you are beyond the reach of ny human dictator, you are not dependent upon ny human institution. You can take anything hat may happen to you in the certainty and the erenity that characterized Jesus.

Realm of Faith

In the world struggle, we deal first of all with he struggle for the minds of men. There are those who believe that man is but an incident in an inexorable historical process. They insist that reality ies in the process and man is incidental. They hold hat social institutions and, in large measure, a man's philosophy are determined by the prevailng mode of production. This is the communist iew. They reject the affirmation of faith and annot in honesty say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty."

Hitler spoke of the "nothingness of the individual," and envisioned a master race ruling the serflike masses of men. He believed that war is beneficent because it is only from war that a leadership emerges qualified to rule. Mussolini declared, "Fascism, the state is absolute, before which individuals and groups are relative. It is for the individual insofar as he coincides with the state."

The issue of faith is crucial.

Einstein was one of the great minds of history. Honesty was a fundamental characteristic of the man. He spoke of "the grandeur of reason incarnate." He saw rationality in experience. "The grandeur of reason incarnate!" His soul sought, but apparently his mind did not find, the glory of love infinite. It is precisely this that lies at the heart of the religion of Jesus. Reason? Of course! Love? Certainly! There is the law of nature. We move forward daily depending upon the regularity of the universe. There is also a moral law. There is a sense of ought written into the nature of things. The man who leaps from a building defying the law of gravity does not break the law; it breaks him. There is a law of love that cannot be broken. "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

There is a crucial issue in the world struggle. It has to do with faith. For us, a decision must be made. It is to accept or to reject the Christ. It involves the complete dedication of the self to his way, his truth, his life. All of this is to say, as the theologian puts it, that God is relevant to all the activities of men. The first issue is in the realm of faith. The course we follow as we confront succeeding issues will be determined by the decision we make when facing the first issue.

Technology and Brotherhood

The second of the crucial issues lies in a question. Can we reconcile the necessities of technology and the necessities of brotherhood? The answer is clear. We must. There are necessities both in the realm of technology and of brotherhood. There are those who think that decisions are to be made solely in terms of economic or technological necessity. There are others who hold the decisions must be made in terms of brotherhood. We must never forget that if we hold there is a Father of us all and that his will is written in the nature of things, those who reject the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," will find themselves working against God himself. They cannot break that law indefinitely; it will break them. On the other hand, there are stern necessities written into technology itself. Any man who has stood in the great structures of the General Electric Company where the mighty turbines are made, knows that there are necessities in technology that in some cases involve large-scale production and the concentration of large numbers of workers at a given place.

Here is a summons to engineers, to economists, to educators—a clear call to ethical teachers. It is the demand that we take the religion of Jesus with sufficient seriousness to discover the concrete means to translate those ideals into the realities of a common life. This means that while we keep all of the great advances of technology, maintain our research, manifest our organizing genius and all the rest of it, we do so in the presence of God. We hold that the entire economic process shall be

subordinated to the ethical principles that lie at the heart of religion and that final decision shall be made in the interests of humanity and in keeping with the moral law. This means that we have to face up to the difficult problems of our day. How can we remove the contradiction that lies in our ability to produce and our inability in large areas to distribute in moral or rationally adequate way? How can we remove the barriers that economic nationalism places between us and an unimpeded world market? How can we protect the American standard of living, for instance, from the competition of lower standards of living which, with machines as good as our own, will put commodities in the world market at a price we cannot meet?

American and Good

It becomes apparent here that we must be guided less by fixed systems of economic dogma than by loyalty to ethical principle and the moral law. The American people, in their manifestation of the pioneering spirit and the democratic ideal, have refused the strait-jackets of economic dogma.

I am one who believes that what we call free enterprise will in the long run, in the overwhelming majority of our endeavor, issue in greater creativity, result in larger productivity and make a more fundamental contribution to freedom than any system that has yet evolved. This does not mean, however, that because I so believe I will on a doctrinaire basis refuse other answers to particular problems that can better be answered, let us say, by a collective answer.

Surely, it is far better for us to have the highways of the nation collectively owned than to have a system of privately owned toll roads throughout the entire nation. I do not want somebody calling the American highway system socialist. I prefer to say it is American and it is good. We do provide for private education and properly so, in the United States, but I am proud of the fact that more than thirty millions of our young people will be in the schools and colleges of the public educational system. I do not want somebody calling that socialist because it is collectively owned and democratically managed. I prefer to say it is American and it is good. I am sure that our endeavors in the field of public health, our public playgrounds, our national parks, and even the great Boulder Dam which was named for a distinguished individualist, are better answers to these problems than private answers could possibly be.

I am sure also that regulation is necessary in certain areas, and I do not want somebody calling it statism when we have a Pure Food and Drug Act, or we insist that people tell the truth about bond issues before the bonds are sold, or that the railroads be so regulated that rebates are ended. It is interesting to note that the air lines of the country are themselves demanding the continuance of regulation in the interest of private enterprise itself.

I am sure also that public corporation offers answers in certain areas that are better than private answers. Anyone who has really studied the Tennessee Valley Authority carefully knows that it is better to have a public corporation charged with developing all the resources of the valley in the unity with which nature endowed the valley than to have a private corporation there, no matter how efficient, developing power and light solely for the purposes of profit. It is better to have the issues of flood control and navigation and reforestation faced by a public corporation in that particular instance. Ex-Governor Dewey is probably right in insisting that we develop the power of the St. Lawrence on a public basis. I do not want somebody coming in and telling me this is socialist. I prefer to say it is American and it is good.

In a word, we keep our minds free. We use the best answers to particular problems that we can find. As I say, in the overwhelming percentage of our enterprise, private enterprise will in all probability prove to be the answer the American will choose, but we refuse to be manacled by midget minds, whether socialist or capitalist or cooperative, or what not; we are going to examine the proposals in the light of the ideal. We must discover some way to reconcile the necessities of technology and the necessities of brotherhood. We have made extraordinary advance. We have done so by keeping minds open. The open mind now must be pledged to the moral law with its fundamental test of measure lying in the question, what does it do to personality, does it express the law of love?

The One and the Many

The third crucial issue involves the reconciliation of the interests of the one and of the many.

We are charged with striking a balance between the freedom that is essential for the fullest expression of the creative mind and the order that is necessary for united action. There are those who believe this is the century of the Mass Man, the century in which the individual is overwhelmed, the century of regimentation, the century of revolution. That we witness mass movements, we cannot deny. Marxism is essentially the engulfing of the one by the many in the name of exalting the one. In the name of abolishing the exploitation of man by man, we witness the most abhorrent of all exploitation, namely, the exploitation of the mind of the one by the mind of the many. Here again is a contradiction in terms, because it is actually the exploitation of the many by the one who is the tyrant. There have been vast movements that are manifesting themselves in the new nationalism that is sweeping through Asia, mass movements that mark the rise of the men of color who refuse segregation and no longer bow to the dictate of the white man. There are those who believe that the mass must give its attention to mass production for the primary purpose of bringing justice to the individual. They insist that the mass must own the means of production and they center their attention primarily upon the distribution of the jointly produced product. So the

ividual becomes but a unit, perhaps only a nber in the vast machine called the collectivity. ere are others, on the contrary, who hold that individual if released to follow his own self erest will unite with others in similar quest, l thus solve the problem of productivity, which asic, and that the issue of distribution in terms justice will follow almost automatically. Some d that these views are incapable of reconcilia- n; it is the one or the other, the one or the many. We must go deeper, because here we deal with age-long struggle between liberty and law, ange and order. If we recall the Psalmist's claration, "I lift up my eyes to the hills," we ght lift our eyes to the hills of ancient Greece. e political ideal of Greece was liberty. This is e principle of change. If we lift our eyes to the ls of Rome, we behold the political ideal which s law. This is the principle of order. But we ow that liberty may lead to license, that law ay move to tyranny. Change may mean chaos, d order may become despotism. How do we rec- cile liberty and law, change and order? We who ld to the Christian view proudly summon the ople to lift their eyes to another hill. It is outside e city of Jerusalem. It is crowned by a cross. pon that hill we behold, not a political ideal, but e overwhelming, overmastering ideal of love. his is the principle of unity. When liberty and w are both subordinated to love, change becomes ange in the interest of the person, and law is e law requisite to community. It is thus that the terests of the one and of the many are recon- led. It is thus that we lay hold upon those col- ctive measures that do express the law of love. is thus that we insist upon the freedom that is equisite for the full expression of the individual. is here that we find our Master declaring, "He ho is greatest among you shall be your servant." Greater love has no man than this, that a man y down his life for his friends."

The reconciliation of the interests of the one nd of the many will not be achieved by the street ghting of revolution, nor by the organization of orld wide conspiracy, trained in espionage and abotage, and pledged to the seizure of power in he name of the proletariat. It is not revolution, or for that matter is it, first of all, reform; it is ather regeneration. This is a religious term, but t is a well-known term. It involves a new spirit. t is a new spirit that is essential. It is the spirit hat leaps artesianlike from love. Reconciliation s dependent upon regeneration and awaits the oming of the new man in Christ Jesus.

The Nation and the World Community

There is a fourth issue in the world struggle, amely, the reconciliation of the diversities of ational cultures and the civilization of the world ommunity. Just as the eventual reunion of the hristian community must be based upon the prin- iple of diversity in unity and all that has been iscovered in the age-long search for God must e conserved for the benefit of the new Christian hurch, so, too, the cultural riches of the centuries, now manifest in the nation unit, must be preserved for the benefit of the coming world community. All that has been achieved in the arts, the sciences, in philosophy and religion, by all the peoples of all time, must become now the treasured heritage of all people in our time. But this means peace, economic justice, racial brotherhood. It means the end of war and of class struggle and the conflict of color. It means disarmament. It means law and order. The curse of conflict must pass. The cure of cooperation must come.

Peace has many aspects. I mention but three: the political, the economic and the spiritual. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Peace must be made. Like bread, it must be made daily. It is impossible to bake at one time all the bread necessary for all time. It is impossible to draft a charter, a constitution, a resolution, and thereby set up peace on earth, not to mention "good will among men."

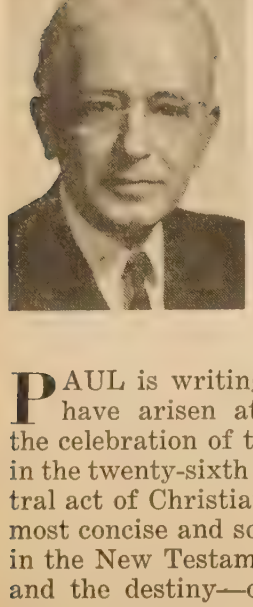
It is one thing to build a house. It is another to rear a happy family. We can say, "The house is built." But the hour never comes when the father and mother can sit by the fireside and in quiet satisfaction say, "The family is reared." The happy home is one in which the members have learned to live together. Each day brings new problems, calls for new solutions, new sacrifices, new services. The structure for a peaceful world, like a house for a family, is important, but peace must not be thought of in terms of structure alone. The plans may be agreed upon at a peace conference. The house may be built. But the fundamental task is that of rearing the family of God in a world house that will become a home for humanity, and will last forever and forever.

We must face the fact frankly and fearlessly that after twenty centuries of Christian teaching men have not yet learned how to live together. Nonetheless, we are determined to establish world law and order, economic justice and racial brotherhood.

Political Aspects of Peace

We are out for peace. We are realists. We face contemporary threats to freedom with full recognition of our responsibility to preserve freedom for our children and our children's children. We know that Russia is at once an expanding imperialism and an infiltrating ideology. Most of us believe the nation, in cooperation with other nations and working through the United Nations, must be so strong that we can convince Russia that if she pursues her expansionist policy she will jeopardize the peace, and having jeopardized it, because of our strength she cannot hope to win. But Russia is also an infiltrating ideology. We must never forget that an ideology cannot be demolished by atomic bombs, nor suffocated by poison gas. It must be met by a better ideology, equally dynamic, that when translated into reality brings more of freedom, justice and brotherhood to men; in a word, more of abundant living. We possess such an ideology.

(Continued on page 42)



The Apostle Declares What He Received
The Church's Mission and Destin

Until He Comes

By Paul Scherer

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. I Corinthians 11:26.

PAUL is writing here of the disorders which have arisen at Corinth in connection with the celebration of the Eucharist, when all at once in the twenty-sixth verse he derives from that central act of Christian worship what is perhaps the most concise and sobering statement you will find in the New Testament of the nature, the mission and the destiny—on this earth at least—of the whole Christian church.

It would seem to me that just here Paul is addressing himself not only to the hopes we cherish for the church of Jesus Christ, but to all the misgivings we have about it, and to everybody who wavers in between the hope and the misgiving without knowing at all what to think of this that we see which God has done, and now he has it on his hands! Said a French skeptic, "Jesus announced the Kingdom of God, but it is the church which has come!" What in the world is it? We have difficulty making it out. What in the world is it for? And what in the world is going to become of it?

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"You proclaim the Lord's death." It is clear from that what the church is: it is the company of the redeemed, with nothing back of it to keep it from looking foolish but the divine effrontery of a cross! Paul must have done his own wondering about these people at Corinth, and the news he had had of them. It was quite all right that there were "not many . . . wise . . . not many . . . powerful, not many . . . noble." But that was putting it mildly. The trouble was, they were such bumptious fellows besides, know-it-alls and show-offs; and what was still worse, they went about, some of them, with fewer morals than we would have thought decent.

What would you have made of a situation like that? Would you have saluted them as "the church of God which is at Corinth . . . called to be saints"? Would their loud talk and intellectual arrogance have got into your prayer? "I give thanks to Go . . . that in every way you were enriched in hi with all speech and all knowledge." Would yo have seen creation in the midst of that chaos, an felt the winds of God in your face?

Paul did. And he was not just tearing out th silver lining in order to throw the cloud awa It was not *their* faithfulness that would stand it ground, by hook or by crook, by rod or by staff He knew that. It was *God's,* marching up out o the long past, carrying all its rigors with it: s terrifyingly fixed, as the law of gravity is fixed that every time you tried to fool with it you prove it! Perhaps that is what foolproof really means He had unfurled it like a flag at the beginning o his letter: "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Chris our Lord." Now he pointed them to the emblem it bore: the emblem of that death which on Cal vary had contradicted all their contradictions "You proclaim the Lord's death." It was in this that he found the challenge of what in fact they *were;* and he set it up in defiance of all they *seemed* to be. It was in this that he came upon the truest, deepest knowledge he had of them. And it was in this, as nowhere else—in this sign not of a "sacred sorrow" but of a "holy redemption"—that they could know themselves, in the face of life's rebuttals, as the frontier, the very invasion point, of God's history of salvation.

Can we still read the riddle of the church like that? Or must we read it this way? "What we have before us," says Kierkegaard, "is not Christianity, but a prodigious illusion, and the people are not pagans, but live in the blissful conceit that they are Christians. How could it occur to anyone that this is what Jesus Christ talked about?" While to match it, out there in the world, is what one recent novelist has called the "anguished cry of modern man seeking to discover his own identity," and "turning at last for the secret" not to the cathedrals of Europe or the laboratories of the West, but to Africa, where there is still "the smell of the womb"; and when you have found the secret, adds the author, "buried in the jungle," in the "bloody, festering tangle," God knows, maybe it is more than the mind can bear!

Is that it? With nothing any longer to strip the engagement of its ultimate terror? Nothing that can read the terror itself as a footnote? No deep

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PAUL SCHERER, long-time pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in New York city and more recently professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, preached this sermon in Boston's Old South Church at the opening service of the National Council of Churches last November. His published works include several volumes of sermons in addition to his Beecher lectures of 1943, entitled, For We Have This Treasure.

th among us, for the first time in all the uries, to breathe, "I thank my God"? This rch he has on his hands is the fellowship of Son, and it is at home in tragedy, even in very death that haunts its life: it got its start e, where the worst in man met the best in God said *No* to it unmistakably; only to have him und the table hard" with his *Yes*, and set about ding the future on it. It is what we are by his d, not just the body which Christ uses, but *his y*, that we betray yet cannot deny, obscure but not destroy. It is still as much a fact about *us* t is about *him;* pervading human history, "too l," as someone has put it, "to be overlooked," "vital to be forgotten"; forever taking shape ore men's eyes, emerging out of the fog of all human weakness and blindness and sin, as a ily likeness takes shape when the family gath- one by one, or as an image appears on the film you wash it back and forth under the acid. We y not have what we hope for yonder: by the ce of God we may have more of it here, a dow of his coming Kingdom, and of what this n earth could be in his terrible and healing nds.

II

That is what the church is: the fellowship of ose whom God in Christ, faithful in our faith-sness, has not only called but redeemed. Then at is it for? "You proclaim the Lord's death." that same token it is the sacrificial community. Surely it is significant for us that of all things e in the mind of the apostle, worship, as the aracteristic function of that community, should me first. On it the existence of the church de-nds. To it everything she does about her exist-ce in this world—her organization, her admin-tration, her machinery—is under bond to con-ibute.

But never can her worship be a means to some d of her own. It is the one means which becomes self the end. We do not glorify God in order to joy him forever, or love him in order to find that love our own eternal happiness. "Did uther," asks Nygren, "write two million words or nothing?" Worship itself is the sacrament of eeting, where the conscience is quickened by od's holiness, the mind fed with his truth, the magination purged by his beauty, the heart pened to his love, the will devoted to his purpose —not that he is waiting around to have me accom-lish all this as I might whet a knife, but precisely ecause it is *not* his holiness, or his truth or his eauty, or his love, or his purpose that he reveals. t is *himself* that he bestows, in that solemn act f recognition. "Father, I have sinned!" "My on! My son!"—which issues in the sudden shelter f those arms and the kiss that stops the mouth f my poor little memorized speech. Our very eing here is the soul's Amen and Hallelujah to hat!

Must we ask again, What for? For what other reat thing than the death of our life which is fe out of death, and God's most ancient habit? Our worship proclaims that. The word Paul uses is exactly the word he uses for proclaiming the gospel. And to that our worship commits us. Not alone in the sacrament which she receives, but in everything that she does, in all her *Gottesdienst,* her service of his in the world which is his Holy Place, the church heralds that human life which meant death, because it was God's life lived down here among men. And by her worship she says that for that life she is willing to die, saving all she will ever save by spending, finding all she will ever find by losing, her true greatness not in anything she achieves but only in what she becomes, herself in some far off way the suffering servant of mankind.

It may well be in this more than in anything else that we shall come to realize our oneness. Not by any "loyalty to the good which is seen to be reasonable." So the president of one of our colleges has cautiously defined religion. Not by rubbing out anybody's theology in the name of ecumenicity, or straining off the question of truth from the question of unity. Not by adding ourselves to each other in order to get "something of the same kind, only bigger." But by learning at last to know what the death is in which the life of God is cradled. Specifically by that are the rivalries which divide us most bitterly judged: the members we vie with each other to gather, the preferment we covet, the pride we take—and we are so sure it is humble pride—in our separate traditions. "Where she is weak, O God, strengthen her." But that is somewhere else. It cannot be where *we* are. We are one of the few strongholds she has left. "Where she is divided, unite her." But have regard, please, for her officers, and her boards, and her institutions, to make no mention at all of her real estate!

Until we hear the Word of the gospel which speaks of death. It says nothing about God's having to look out for any of us, or for our nation. Maybe that is why it is measurably easier for the World Council than for any National Council to be the symbol of our oneness. Some pious soul over the air the other evening seemed to think that the Almighty was pretty well committed to some sort of protective strategy. "I can't believe," said he, "that the God of all creation, after these tired centuries, would allow men to burn themselves to a cinder." Perhaps he should try a little harder! The Corinthians had put it that way to Paul. Couldn't they count on the covenant grace he had told them about to see them through? And the only answer they got from him was the story of Israel's flight from Egypt: *All* our fathers were under the cloud, and *all* passed through the sea. They did *all* eat the same spiritual meat, and did *all* drink the same spiritual drink. But with *many* of them—it was something of an understatement: only Caleb and Joshua came out alive!—with *many* of them, God, to say the least, was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

We are not the elect, handpicked for heaven. We are handpicked for responsibility and peril.

"As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup." It cannot be understood except as "a call to arms, showing what enemy we have to confront, what warfare we have to wage, what weapons we have to use." "You proclaim the Lord's death." It is a costly word, and it cannot be proclaimed except in the heart of conflict. Writes Jacques Ellul of Bordeaux University, "When we have really seen the plight of our contemporaries, when we know why they will not have anything to do with our 'disembodied' gospel, when we have shared their sufferings, their despair and their desolation, then we shall be able to proclaim it." We are God's shock troops! Christianity never raises as a primary question the defending of this faith or the saving of that institution. It always raises a prior question: Are we caught and held by whatever it is up yonder to which we are bound not just by duty but by the freest choices of our being; not by what we can command, but by what commands us; not by what can carry us through this tragedy of a broken world, but by what can set us about with power to bind up its wounds and bring back into its eyes as we can the light of the knowledge of the glory of God which is in the face of Jesus Christ?

III

But there is one thing more in these words of St. Paul. What is the church? It is the redeemed community. What is it for? It is the sacrificial community, by the very sign and seal of its worship. So what is to become of it? "You proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." It is the community that lives in anticipation of the end. But that is not just a grim kind of mood, with its eyes fixed on another world! It is no—may I use the naughty word?—no eschatological foxhole from which, if you live in Europe, you may look forward, in George MacLeod's phrase, to some "celestial concert in thin air" after the last cobalt bomb has exploded, or if you live in the States may expect by foray or strategy safely to force the Lord's hand a little and do his Kingdom gentle violence! Rather is it the knowledge that wherever Christ is, in time or beyond it, there he precipitates the crisis. Wherever he is there is judgment, and there is demand, and there is this present being shaped by that future which is the end without end. It is the knowledge that we have already reached what has been described as our last frontier, and there have encountered not nothingness but God!

It has to do with the judgment under which we stand now. Yeats perhaps got hold of that much when he wrote of the rough beast somewhere in the desert, with its slow thighs, and blank and pitiless gaze, slouching toward Bethlehem to be born. And the culture of which we are a part wants us to see nothing but a Great Ally. "God Bless America!" Did it never occur to you that he may have quite a problem on his hands when he tries to answer that prayer? Worse still, have you never been disturbed by the thought that you might not like his answer? The Jews did not! We used to sing lustily when I was a boy, "Take Jesus with you." No mention was made of where you were going. It did not seem to matter much. Although the sons of Eli lost the ark of God that was and their lives with it! Winston Churchill was once talking whimsically about our perpetual little panics. "A tiny mouse enters the room," he said, "and all the mighty potentates tremble." Shall God Almighty enter the room and nobody turn a hair? I still remember the sudden chill with which I read of some wounded soldier who looked up at a visitor in the hospital when she said to him, meaning well, "I'm sorry you lost your leg," and answered with a smile, "I didn't lose it, Ma'am; I traded it in for an easy conscience." But an easy conscience is the one thing on earth we can't have—with God around!

Could that be what it means for the church to live in anticipation of the end? Always this thunder on the left! And could it mean, too, that what is asked of us now has acquired another dimension, and an exigency which we had not dreamed of before, just because the powers of that life to come have already invaded the life that now is? They were all wrong, those early Christians, to mind the clock; but they were nearer right in being wrong, nearer right in their day, counting, than we are with our constant postponements, we for whom the days don't count! "The time is now—" says the radio announcer, and adds some figure from a dial. "The time is now," says the New Testament, and adds nothing but a period. And that means nothing for the way we live but a revolution! It doesn't just enhance our moral idealism, or underscore our Christian principles, or try to make of us impractical perfectionists. It moves in on our morals with the Kingdom of God. It makes clear "what the things are that in the last resort are worth caring about." It casts God's fire on the earth, only to unshackle in the midst of it—his *love!*

And it is his *love* we have got to answer for before the bar of history, if history can ever stop long enough on its way down a steep place to the sea! But never mind that. We have got to answer for it here in the terrible presence of One who never saw anything in heaven or hell but human faces: no golden streets and pearly gates; no flames, except as the refuse burning there in the Valley of Hinnom reminded him of some ultimate horror; only the multitudes on the right hand and on the left. That is what he saw all day long, and nobody among them who knew why he was where he was until he was told. "As you did it . . ." Perhaps the words in my case cannot run without the negative: "As you did it not . . . "! And he throws both his arms around people I never paid much attention to: "One of the least of these my brethren."

Is that what these words of Paul mean? "Until he comes." That we have to answer *now* for the love that always supplies what it demands? And more, that this far-off future, all sketched in, right hand and left, around the blessed Lord God and

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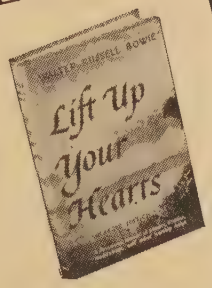

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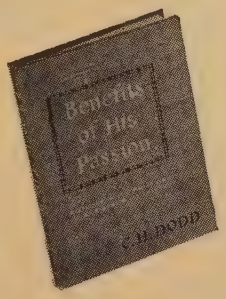

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Until He Comes

(Continued from page 30)

our brethren, exists for us as Christians in the present? Is that away there at the end really how it is here, truer of life at this moment than anything else we think of as true, truer than everything else we are willing to submit ourselves to as facts? The one question which is loosed at us, with the sharpest barbs, is whether or not we as Christians can let that future, "As you did it," interpret and determine this present—break into it, control it, fashion it—very much as the curly-headed little Prince Charlie, Elizabeth's son, must let his destiny as England's king shape all the years of his childhood and youth. Or shall we be content instead with what goes by the name of "progress," and turns out to be only the alibi which "a good deal more of the same" has found for itself, as it sneaks in under cover, trying to reconcile us with going on as we are in this hot-rod race where Time presses its foot on the throttle and Death holds itself in readiness to jam on the brakes?

No wonder the apostle writes these same Corinthians later on, in his own impassioned way, beseeching them not to receive the grace of God in vain. To set that inconceivably great thing meager tasks, and reap from it only thin harvests, was unthinkable. Not the grace of God in vain! The depth of his wisdom and the length of his patience, the clarity of his justice and the fullness of his mercy, the gallantry of his love and the steadiness of his power—to harness the tides and turn a flutter mill! Heaven turned wrong side out, its treasure poured on the sand for nothing!

I think our very being here is in answer to his prayer! Even then, and even at best, we are promised no easy victory. Our hopes are not the hope of the world. Christ is. It is his victory, not ours, which "struggles to express itself at every point along the way." Hope is God's word, even if w cannot spell it; and it is his last word, "Until l comes." This death which we proclaim did n transform the world into a place where we c whistle a jaunty tune, as if every story we bound to have our kind of happy ending, a everything at last could be wrapped up in a ne bundle and put away on a tidy shelf. Rather is a world where tragedy and triumph are so inte wrought that we cannot disentangle them: exce that in Christ we can see now both the beauty a the terror of life, both the goodness and the seve ity of God, the fire of his judgment and the sola of his wings, this madness down here held in th splendor of that ultimate love. When the allie landed on the coast of France, Europe was sti occupied by enemy troops; but the end was a ready in the beginning that had been made on th beachheads of Normandy!

"You proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

In H. F. M. Prescott's novel *The Man on Donkey* there is a poor serving girl whose vision of God's glory had brought her into the shadow of the scaffold. "Wat," she said to her faithful friend, "there's naught any more to fear. For already, already God has done it." "What's done?" asked Wat. "Why that you know well," she answered. "It's God's great work that is done. Afore time was he tho't it, and as he built the world he built his own hurt into the walls of it for mortar to hold the walls forever. So it is that already, little as they know it, he hath all men taken in his net. And when he will he may hale in. How else? Shall that strong One fail of his purpose? Or that Wise, who made all, be mistook?" And so when they came to take her, asking her on the way of her visions, the only thing she told them was this: "There was a great wind of light blowing, and sore pain."*

*H. M. F. Prescott, *The Man on a Donkey* (New York: Macmillan, 1952). Used by permission.

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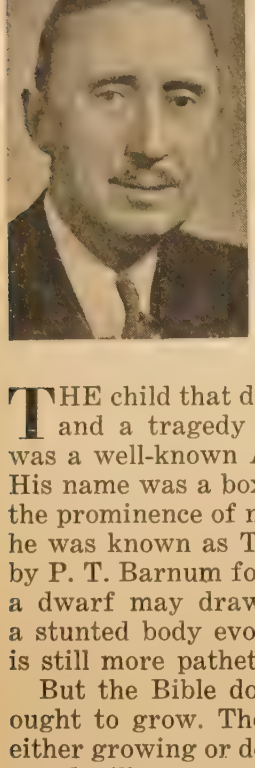

The Gift of Growth

By Ralph W. Sockman

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. II Peter 3:18.

THE child that does not grow is a loss to society and a tragedy to itself. Charles S. Stratton was a well-known American of the 19th century. His name was a box-office attraction. But his was the prominence of notoriety rather than fame, for he was known as Tom Thumb and was exhibited by P. T. Barnum for years. However much money a dwarf may draw as a curiosity, the sight of a stunted body evokes pity. And a stunted mind is still more pathetic.

But the Bible does not merely tell us that we ought to grow. The deeper truth is that we are either growing or decaying all the time. We cannot stand still as personalities. The human body grows until it reaches adult size. Then normally it absorbs enough to maintain itself in balance.

All-Inclusive Need

The human mind, however, cannot healthily remain in balance. It either grows or loses. When the mind goes through the same routines, thinking the same thoughts, it goes into a mental sleep; and sleep beyond the necessary daily allowance is a form of mental deterioration. We may fool ourselves and feel comfortable in our mental stagnation. But time will not let the human organism stand still indefinitely. Time, as we say, marches on. And something in us eventually rebels unless we march with it. Our need to grow expresses itself in our restlessness when we think we are not improving our time. When no purpose is being advanced, when time does not bring progress in something we care about, our central need rebels. Professor Richard Cabot of Harvard called growth our all-inclusive need.

Not only do we have to grow in order to live as human beings, but we have to grow toward a goal. Some time ago I observed a house which was quite a monstrosity. It was built for a small family, but as the children came, rooms were added here and there in haphazard fashion. The hou had been pushed out, but it had not grown towar any architectural pattern. So in life, growing not enough. We must grow up, and that require plan and purpose.

Christ Is Our Model

Peter in his Epistle recognized this need, fo when he bade his readers grow, he also gave the their pattern: "Grow in the grace and knowledg of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." For thos first Christians as for ourselves Jesus Christ is th model. The more they learned about him, the mor they longed to be like him. His mind with its spark ling wisdom and infinite understanding made hi the Master Teacher.

Also his knowledge was blended with a grac which learning does not always possess. Som knowledge actually adds to the dangers of living Justice Jackson of the United States Suprem Court after presiding over the Nuremberg trial of the German leaders said: "It is one of the para doxes of our time that modern society needs t fear only the educated man. . . . The most serious crimes against civilization can be committed only by educated and technically competent people." How tragically we realize this in the present Atomic Age. In a day when wits are being sharpened to devise new ways of destroying, we see how desperately we need to grow into Christ's combination of grace and knowledge.

What do we mean by the grace of Christ? For one thing, it means his grace of manner. He not only did the right thing, but he did it in the right way. His was the grace of manner which drew little children to him. He had that grace of speech which could disarm the fears of those who were honestly suspicious of him, as was seen in his conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well. In sullen mood she had come to draw water. She suspected the motives of Jesus when he began to speak to her, especially since he was a Jew and the Jews were supposed to have no dealings with the Samaritans. But Jesus gracefully dispelled her resentment and revealed new resources for right living.

Or think of the grateful woman who brought the precious alabaster box and began to anoint his feet. The disciples rebuked the woman for her

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RALPH W. SOCKMAN has spent forty years in the ministry of New York's Christ Church Methodist. In addition, he teaches at Union Theological Seminary and broadcasts over the National Radio Pulpit. His many books include his Beecher lectures of 1941, published as The Highway of God. *Of his sermon for this special issue of The Pulpit, he writes: "It makes no particular reference to Dr. Morrison, but I know of no man who can surpass Dr. Morrison in demonstrating the spirit of growth through a long career of service. The sermon, therefore, has Dr. Morrison in mind."*

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The Gift of Growth

(Continued from page 34)

extravagance, but Jesus with his gentlemanly considerateness healed the wounds of their words by his gracious tribute to her generosity.

Of course, the grace of Christ was more than his manner, but let us not deprecate the value of good manners. Politeness has a refining influence. We may say that good manners are only a social polish or veneer, but we might remember that polish brings out the beauty of grain in the wood. In our desire to be sincere and genuine, let us not mistake rawness for realism. Let us improve the outward aspects of our behavior, knowing that by putting the better foot forward we help to pull the worse foot after it. The grace of good manners belongs to the gospel of Christ.

But the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is deeper. It is a graciousness of spirit which is courteously considerate of others' opinions without compromising one's own convictions; a graciousness which puts the ear down to the level of those less mentally tall without showing a stoop, and slows the pace for those of feebler strength without seeming to be holding back.

You recall the beautiful passage in the Old Testament which depicts the coming deliverer in these words: "A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench." Jesus fits that pattern. When he stood before the fallen woman about to be stoned, he did not crush her bruised spirit by adding words of condemnation. Rather, he cupped his sympathy around the smoking taper of her almost extinguished hope until it flared again to brightness.

Evidences of God's Grace

But gracefulness of manner and graciousness of spirit do not explain all that the early Christians meant by the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." They saw in him the grace of God—the unmerited favor which God grants to his children, over and above what law and justice require.

We glimpse this extra goodness of God in nature. By physical law we can predict the hour of the sunset but who can foretell its colors? This evening the western horizon may be adorned in gorgeous red; tomorrow night its garment may be a purple robe flecked with gold. These glorious colors are not exactly necessary to sustain man's bodily health. The alternation of light and darkness would suffice for that. But the Creator throws in sunset colors as extras, wrapping up our days in gay colors somewhat as we tie gift packages at Christmastide. Nature reveals the grace of God.

So does history. Before Christ came, God had done all that justice would seem to demand in his dealings with his children. He had created a law-abiding universe, sent lawmakers to lay down the rules of living and prophets to interpret them. He had endowed man with powers able to give him dominion over the earth. What more could man ask of God? But he did more. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whos ever believes in him should not perish but hav eternal life." Such is the grace of God. And whe men beheld Jesus, they said, "God is like that."

Yet when we look at Jesus Christ, we say, "Go is like that, but I can't be. His grace and goodnes are too high for me. I cannot attain unto him. And in our own strength we cannot copy Jesus a a model. But God does not expect us to copy. That' the point. The divine command is not, "Cop Christ," but "Grow in the grace and knowledg of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Growth Is an Innate Power

Growth is not a copying; it is a power given t us. This is a fact we tend to forget in our machin age, especially we who live in cities. Millions o us have so far removed ourselves from the soi that we cease to think in terms of nature an growth. We live by making and trading. We tal of *making* our goals, *making* our schedules, *mak ing* our fortunes. Some of us even get to thinking of ourselves as self-made men.

When we read the parable of the talents, we praise the man of five talents who put his money out in trade and made five talents more, and the man of two talents who made two talents more. But read the parable again and note the words: "To one he *gave* five talents; to another he *gave* two talents." The talents with which they started trading were gifts. So in life the talents of our brains, the raw materials with which we work, the fertility of the soil which multiplies the seeds, the light of the sun by which we see—all these are gifts. I can remember the first dollar I ever earned, but I cannot remember the first gift I ever received, for all the care which nurtured me through infancy, all the forces and factors which prepared me to earn my first wage were gifts to me.

The power of growth by which we transmute the elements of soil and sun and good into brawn and brain, by which we can see what is ahead of us and adapt ourselves to it, by which we can add our days and efforts together in plan and purpose —all this is God's gift.

Growth Demands Proper Reception

But what difference does this make in our daily living? Just that we should be more grateful? Ah, more than that. It means that, if we are to grow into great living, we must learn better how to receive from God. George Eliot said, "Receptivity is a noble and massive virtue." Read your Bible and note how frequently the word receive occurs. Growing is so much a matter of properly receiving.

Take it in mental growth. The mind is not a mere tool for digging up facts, nor is it a mere repository for remembered data. I have a distant relative—one of those relatives whom we rather like to keep as distant as possible! He has one of the brightest minds I have ever known and he has stored it with so many facts that if you ask him a

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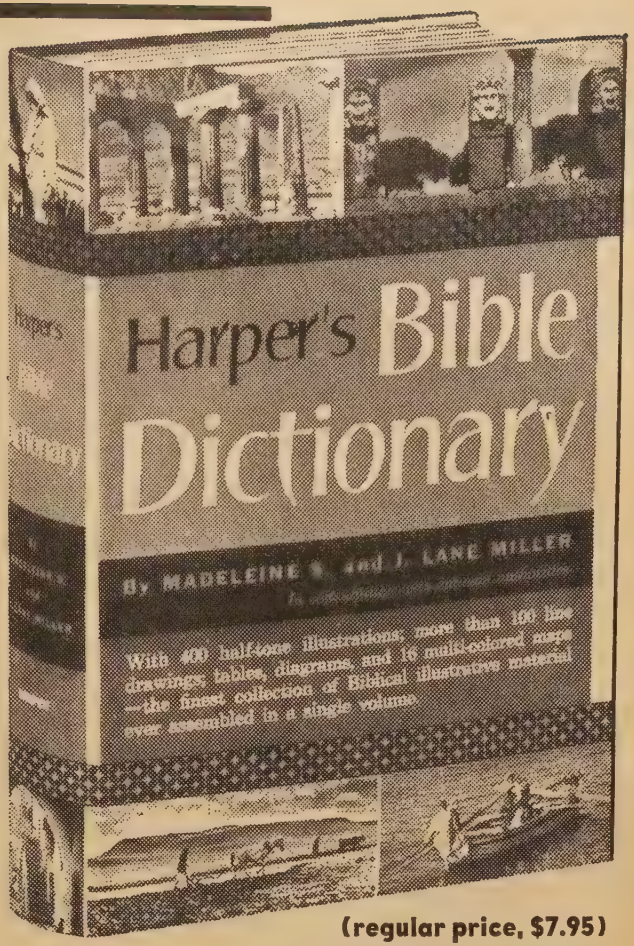
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Key P-1

What Is Up to Us

(Continued from page 9)

there is more. "Work out your own salvation *with fear and trembling.*"

What did he mean by that? A mournful depression of spirits? A mood that thinks the proper way to be better is to seem to feel worse? No, not that. He is thinking of something not terrifying, but yet tremendous—something that makes our whole being vibrate with suggestions that shake us to our depths. He has been telling of Jesus, who came down from his oneness with the Father to take the form of a servant and to die for our sins upon the cross. Contemplating that, no man could think of salvation in any casual or supercilious way. No man could suppose that it is lightly won. Remembering the cross of Christ, we understand the emotions throbbing through the Negro spiritual,

> Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble;
> Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

When we look at Christ we perceive the immeasurable height of the life toward which we are to be lifted up; and remembering what his life cost him, we see what salvation into his likeness always has to cost. We cannot get off with little piddling bargains of respectable behavior. We cannot be saved just by being correct and nice and conventionally good. The cross confronts us; and Christ on the cross means for us awe and wonder and adoration as we look at him, and a sense of unworthiness almost desperate as we think of ourselves apart from him.

God Works in Us

Thank God that we do have fear and trembling; for what these mean is that our souls are being caught hold of and stretched to an upreach so high that it is agonizing. If we had only our little pattern to measure salvation by, there would be no trouble. But the pattern is Jesus, because of whom we know that he who would be greatest must be servant of all. Where were you, he may some day ask us, when the world was full of sacrificial causes? And when he speaks, we cannot act as though we did not hear. Goodbye, then, to the salvation of smooth privilege, to the choice of the easy job, the quick reward, the comfortable place. When a man contemplates his life in terms of Jesus' expectation, he does fear and tremble lest he fail. He may have his moments when, like Simon Peter, he finds Christ intolerable, and cries out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" But through all his trembling, he can be delivered from the fear of the only thing that could be fatal—the loss of faith that through all his unworthiness God's love in Christ will hold him still.

So we are led climactically to that which was always St. Paul's prevailing message. Work out your own salvation—yes, for there must always be the sturdiness of personal responsibility. But underneath that is the steadiness of a surer trust. "God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." Every little glimmer of goodness in us is not ours but God's.

"Right-sounding words," you say. "But what do they mean? Where is God at work, and where may I perceive him?"

To that supreme question now as the crown of all our thought let me swiftly try to give an answer.

In some of the theology which has come to us from 20th century continental Europe, there is an austere and exalted seriousness, but I think there is also grave distortion. When Karl Barth writes of God as the "Wholly Other," and when Emil Brunner writes that He is "the unheard-of, unrecognized, mysterious person, who cannot be discovered anywhere in the world," there is danger of a warped and corroding heresy—a heresy against the very nature of Jesus who saw his Father revealed in the common facts of this life of ours into which he had come to be incarnate. And today as then, in order to find God, we do not have to climb up into the heavens or go down into the depths, but to remember that "the Word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart."

'Beauty Hath Godhead in It'

You can find God, I think, in the beauty of his creation. This hill is a lovely place. Let the wonder of God manifest itself here and now to the sensitiveness of your perceptions—in the breadth of sky, in the glint of river, in sunlight and moonbeams and the vast quietness of stars, in old trees wakening presently to the new miracle of spring. How many of you go from time to time to the high platform of the seminary tower and look out on what you see? More than forty years ago a friend of mine and I came out of old St. George's, crossed the empty grounds and climbed the tower late in a night in June. A great full moon had nearly finished its course across the sky, and dipped down, like a silver ship into its harbor, beyond the oak trees in the west. From the quadrangle below the tower, planted then with roses, and from shadowy spaces all around, there rose the ineffable scent of dewy grass and indistinguishable gardens. In the east the first faint quiverings of the dawn began to stir; but nowhere was there a voice or sound. The whole earth, in that last vigil before the darkness turned today, was "Quiet as a nun/Breathless with adoration."[1] Then as the hidden sun drew closer to the horizon and the eastern sky was like a field of banners, and everywhere the birds were waking, it was as though one stood in hushed awareness not of any mortal beauty only, but of the fringe of the garments of God whose glory was passing by.

And if God may be found in the beauty of the earth, so surely he is found in the human souls that have touched yours. Great men have lived here, and their legacy is with us still. I go and read the lines upon the tablet to Wilbur Cosby

[1]Samuel Wordsworth, "It Is a Beauteous Evening."

: "A thinker who sensed the wonder of life, interpreted its fulness to a bewildered age"; those on the tablet to the beloved Berryman n: "A Christian who both as he taught and as ived revealed his Master." God worked in h; but God works in you also through those st to you whose names do not need to be on tablet to make you think of them with daily itude to God. The look in their eyes and the h of their hands are enough to make you know something out of heaven comes down con- ally to touch our common earth. You can as Pompilia said of Caponsacchi, the friend had come to save her:

> Through such souls alone
> God stooping shows sufficient of his light
> For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise.[2]

Strength Through Fellowship

ut most intimately and certainly of all God es into yourself through the grace of the risen rist, of whom St. Paul said, "It is no longer I live, but Christ who lives in me." The very gs that may make you spiritually discouraged he inner disquiet, the sense of emptiness— se are your Lord showing you that you cannot content apart from him. The timid stirrings your soul, the sudden aspiration, the quivering ires that are like the wings of little birds that do not yet quite dare to fly—these are God inviting you. And particularly when you are in the fellowship of those who like yourself want God's salvation, he manifests himself, both in what you know you want and in what he gives you strength to begin to do. One of the great Christians of recent times wrote in his journal, after he had been to a retreat with men he loved: "Committed myself anew, with Christian brothers, to unreserved docility and devotion before my Master." Christian comradeship can kindle that devotion.

Then, with human comradeship or without it, God can make us sure of him. He does so not when we sit still and speculate, but when we go out into the service he has set for us. That is what you can find now, and in your parishes presently. Here is something which in God's name you know you must try to do. It may be to carry the message of Christ to some special man who needs it but may not want to hear it. It may be to stand alone against some ugly wrong. It may be to launch in your community some fine effort which the majority will not follow. You say you cannot do it. But you obey the moving of your heart—and presently the thing you knew you could not do is done. It is God in you who has been at "work for his good pleasure."

Be glad then and take courage. The salvation that you must seek with fear and trembling will be fulfilled in God.

[2] Robert Browning, "The Ring and the Book."

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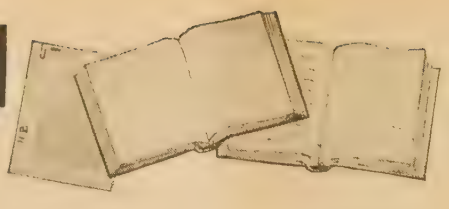

I VENTURE that more than once some of us have emerged from a subway kiosk in some unfamiliar portion of this city and have found ourselves all turned around. The trouble did not lie in our beliefs. We still believed that north was north and south was south, and our opinions about east and west were orthodox. That, however, did not save the situation. What good did our beliefs do until we could make them real to us? And some of us have stood still for fairly five minutes until we could make ourselves *see* what we *believed.* —*Harry Emerson Fosdick,* What Is Vital in Religion *(New York: Harper, 1955).**

YESTERDAY afternoon in café . . . he had said: "The tellect is the soul's pimp." She not wanted to know what he mea but of course he had gone on explained that the intellect was c stantly seducing the soul with kno edge, when all the soul needed was own wisdom.—*Paul Bowles,* The S der's House *(New York: Rand House, 1955).**

"I LIKE people who can do thing said Mr. Emerson. Of course, all do. We celebrate the doers, men of action. Moses led the childr of Israel out of Egypt. Joshua "fit battle of Jericho." Elijah slew prophets of Jezebel. Nehemiah rebu the walls of Jerusalem. Columbus d covered America. Washington cross the Delaware. But these men cou also be honored for what they wou not do. Moses refused to be called t son of Pharaoh's daughter. Josh would not bring back a cowardly port. Elijah disdained bowing t knee to Baal. Nehemiah scorned co promise with Sanballat, because was doing a great work for the Lo and could not come down. Columb flatly declined the appeals and threa of his crew that he turn back. Was ington rebuffed the demand of t British that he surrender. These we great men also because of the thing they refused to do.

"I like people who can do things

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Pulpit Calendar

Jan. 1—New Year's Day.
Jan. 1-8—Universal Week of Prayer.
Jan. 6—Epiphany.
Jan. 8—1st Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 15—2nd Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 15-21—Church and Economic Life Week.
Jan. 17-24—Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
Jan. 22—3rd Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 29—4th Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 29-Feb. 5—Youth Week.
Feb. 5—5th Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 12—Race Relations Sunday.
Feb. 15—Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 17—World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 19—1st Sunday in Lent. Day of Prayer for Students.
Feb. 19-26—Brotherhood Week.
Feb. 26—2nd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 4—3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 11—4th Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 18—Passion Sunday.
Mar. 25—The Annunciation.
Mar. 25—Palm Sunday.
Mar. 25-31—Holy Week.
Mar. 29—Maundy Thursday.
Mar. 30—Good Friday.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

Mr. Emerson, and I am certain he would and did like also the who would not do things—men have won't power. . . .—*Orva Lee* A Candle for the Dark *(Nash- Abingdon, 1955).**

HEY think they know once and for all what the world is like, at they don't ever have to look again," he had thought. And it true: many of his friends had ed what the world looked like, life was like, and they would examine either of them again nd out whether they were right rong. This was because they had or were still going to school, knew how to write and even to rstand what was written, which more difficult.—*Paul Bowles,* The er's House *(New York: Random se, 1955).**

AM enormously impressed by the act that the construction of the ston Street Subway affected the South Church tower and its foun- ons. The movement of modern life ffecting the foundations of the se of Life in which all of us dwell. —*Frederick M. Meek,* The Life to Live *w York: Oxford University Press, 5).**

Pulpit Post

rishioners' Problems

IR: If you have discontinued pub- tion of the column "Titles and ts," I shall not object strenuously, it has always seemed to me to be dubious value. However, I submit following titles from a series I ached on Problems in Personal ristian Conduct, based on Romans 11—15:6: "Love God and Do as u Please," "Don't Gamble but Bet ur Life," "How to Be Intoxicated hout Drinking," "If You Smoke Be Fire!"

I am sure that smoking is not one the major ethical problems con- nting the Christian in today's rld. But neither was eating meat ered to idols the major concern of ristians in Paul's day. It was a blem to many church members, wever, and Paul was not above deal- g with the problem in such a way to make clear the deeper issues volved. I believe the preacher is der obligation to deal with some the issues which may seem to be worthy of his spiritual sophistica- n but are still a genuine problem his people. If he can inject some the spirit of Paul into the discus- on he will at least be in good com- ny as he sermonizes on the modern uivalents of eating meat offered to ols and of ladies keeping silent in urch.

JOSEPH M. SMITH.
Coachella Valley Christian,
Coachella, Calif.

IN my young manhood I had a critical nervous breakdown. It was the most terrifying wilderness I ever traveled through. I dreadfully wanted to commit suicide but instead I made some of the most vital discoveries of my life. My little book, *The Meaning of Prayer,* would never have been written without that breakdown. I found God in a desert. Why is it that some of life's most revealing insights come to us not from life's loveliness but from life's difficulties? As a small boy said, "Why are all the vitamins in spinach and not in ice cream, where they ought to be?" I don't know. You will have to ask God that, but vitamins *are* in spinach and God is in every wilderness.—*Harry Emerson Fosdick,* What Is Vital in Religion *(Harper, 1955).**

WHEN I come to think of it, I read about male angels, like Gabriel, and nothing at all about female angels. Yet every artist paints only lady angels. I suppose most artists, being male, know themselves too well to venture the masculine kind.—*Orva Lee Ice,* A Candle for the Dark *(Nashville: Abingdon, 1955).**

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The Century of the Great Reconciliatio

(Continued from page 27)

There are three words that must be kept in mind when we consider the political aspects of peace: cooperative, continuous and consent.

President Eisenhower in a recent address spoke of "cooperative peace." There can be no other. No nation can set up the conditions of peace. Peace cannot be dictated. Coercion here is a contradiction in terms. Some day the world will be secure because the world has established law and order, because we have made the necessary adjustments in sovereignty. This must be done together. It must be cooperative. At the moment the free nations are determined to retain their freedom. They must cooperate to do so. Tomorrow, when the contemporary threat has become a few dark pages in history, the cooperating peoples of the earth will have set up the institutions of peace. Cooperation involves understanding. There must be increasing respect for the cultures of other peoples.

Political Aspects

The second word is continuous. The institutions of world law and order like our own legislative assemblies and courts, our executive bodies, must be in continuous operation. We do not beat back disease at the world level except as public health officials, backed by the health forces of the nations, are continuously alert. Typhus knows no morality. It strikes, and must be struck immediately. Aggression occurs. A nation's independence is at stake. The forces of law must meet the henchmen of anarchy and at once. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and an informed and dedicated public opinion is essential to the maintenance of peace.

The third word is consent. It is in a sense a corollary of cooperation. Cooperation is voluntary. But the fact of consent has wider significance. The structure and procedures of the world political organization must make it possible for all peoples to participate in the decision of the world body and to vote upon the measures that are debated in the world forum, and that is what the Assembly of the United Nations is, a world forum. We cannot demand unanimity. That is to deny the democratic principle of majority rule. But we can give opportunity for all to be heard, and for all to hear, and for all to record conviction. True, a minority may not have consented to the majority decision and from that point of view may be coerced. When, however, the nations approach the world political problem cooperatively, seek solution through agencies continuously available, and finally come to decision, that is as near consent as is humanly possible and is the basis upon which free peoples act.

The second aspect of peace de with economic considerations. T first aspect, the political, dealt w the issue of power and its control the democratic process. The seco the economic, deals with the issue justice and its establishment by democratic process. Political str tures will fall if erected upon fou dations of economic injustice. As matter of fact, we cannot build Kingdom of God upon unjust fou dations.

Economic Aspects

Our own economy is involved in t economic aspects of peace. Commun control of vast markets, heretofo open to us, means a contracting wor market. Expanding trade with t free world is essential; tariffs becom a spiritual issue.

But let me ask a pertinent questio Suppose every Russian in the wor were to die tonight. Suppose th Kremlin walls were to disintegra and become dust. Suppose Russia a nation were to cease to exist, h military might disappear. Would ou problems be over? Would security an peace be our lot? No, the spectacle o a world in part overfed and in larg part hungry; a world with its differ ing standards of living; a world wit millions who have never known th meaning of liberty; a world hungry ignorant and diseased, would still b a restless, seething world. The revo lutionary surge would still confron us. The world must be reborn.

When we speak of rebirth, we face the third aspect of peace, the spiritual Mutual trust is essential to commu nity. When we speak of peace we are thinking of world community. This means the extension of mutual respect and mutual trust to the world. Without mutual trust, legal arrangements, no matter how perfectly expressed in charters or constitutions, cannot function.

Spiritual Aspects

The world needs a new unifying force. Peoples can be united in the face of danger, and at times an enemy is such a unifying force. But an enemy cannot permanently unite. If victory is won, the enemy disappears and the unifying force is gone. In defeat, the fires of resentment are banked until they can blaze again in revolutionary movements for freedom. Class, race and even nation are not adequate. The nation represents the most extensive unifying force man has yet achieved. But something more is necessary. It lies in the fact of a common family, in the brotherhood that flows from the proposition that there is a Father of us all. Thus the early Christians declared, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty." This is the basic spiritual

hat must be made known to man, fundamental fact upon which ultimately rests.

t the revelation of God in burnush, in pillar of cloud by day, in of fire by night, in prophet and was not enough. The Eternal had e seen in a person to be under-.. Ideas are meaningful for most when beheld incarnate in other This God knew. It is our faith God took upon himself the limins of humanity, so that we beng him might know him. The ulti- became intimate. Perfection alive in personality. The Word me flesh. "He who has seen me seen the Father." "I and the ner are one." "I am the way, and truth, and the life." God's truth is vn! Speaking for God, Jesus said, ssed are the peacemakers." In the moment with his disciples before cross, he said, "A new commandt I give to you, that you love one ther; even as I have loved you." eater love has no man than this, a man lay down his life for his nds." "He who is greatest among shall be your servant."

hus, the world mission of Chrisity with its revelation of the law ove, revealed in a person; with its stence upon the infinite worth of individual; with its test of greats dependent upon service; with its l judgment, "As you did it to one the least of these," is in fact the ritual basis of peace. We need coment, convinced consecrated laymen l laywomen, who, with the deternation and the love that he revealed the garden, will kneel in commitnt, saying, "Thy will be done," and h the same sense of mission will e to face even a cross, if need be, t man may possess peace.

I have sought to center your attenn upon the word reconciliation. This the key word if we would move m contemporary struggle to brothly cooperation. But we must not be sentimentalists. We must recognize clearly that there are some practices that cannot be reconciled. If you have tyranny, you do not have freedom. Freedom is essential to the flowering of personality. There is a moral obligation to maintain it and to extend it. You cannot have at one and the same time a static and a dynamic community. There are those who want everything settled. They demand the settlement in terms of situations that suit them. Tyranny and freedom cannot be reconciled. Truth and falsehood cannot be reconciled. Good and evil cannot be reconciled. A man cannot at one time tell the truth and the lie. There are basic choices to be made here. These choices lie in the realm of principle. The Way, the Truth and the Life were revealed long since by One who was the full revelation of God himself. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."

"HENRY had lived so long in the world of Higher Mathematics that he had forgotten how to do sums."—*Aldous Huxley*, The Genius and the Goddess *(New York: Harper, 1955).**

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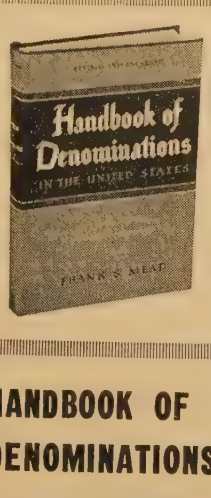

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enst

The Opportunity Is Now Yours

HOWEVER much we ministers may try to soft-pedal or apologize for any public mention, not to say discussion, of church finances, it is nonetheless a mighty lively problem. I have a dozen letters in my file from ministers in various communions urging me to devote a column to it. At first I shied away, for I was far from sure I had anything worth saying. But the letters still came. In addition, recently in a discussion group the matter was raised very seriously and from an angle that to me was—I frankly confess my traditionally constricted background—very strange.

The point under discussion was the perennial one: the order or form of public worship. Several of the gentlemen discussing the problem were inclined to attempt innovations which did not seem to me in the slightest degree to be improvements or even attractive. One recommendation had to do with the offering. In the speaker's opinion, it had absolutely no place in a service of worship, and if he were able to have his way, it would be omitted entirely; if not, he would put it at the end of the service where it would be at least obtrusive. Not all agreed, but several felt that there was much to be said for the suggestion.

Focal Point

To me the idea seemed very shortsighted. I can easily conceive of having the offertory after the sermon, with great effectiveness, even in the type of service common in severely nonliturgical communions. But please, not as a means of easing out of the picture something crass and unlovely. Instead, the offering could be made the focal point of climax, the act whereby each worshiper joins in the most intimate genius of worship, the giving of his substance, which still can mean—and does for many of us—the giving of himself.

Of course, the minister who risks having the offering after the sermon is a gallant man: there are still plenty of folk in our churches like the forthright father Clarence Day immortalized, whose gift was always in direct ratio to the quality of the sermon he had just endured. I refuse to become sidetracked at this point, but must remark in passing that I myself once felt gratitude that that was the pl appointed for the offering. Earlier the service I had signed a card, c veniently to hand in the pew, in cating that I planned to be in t city several months and would like make that particular church church home. The quality of sermon was such that within the fi 10 of the 25 minutes too generous alloted for the sermon I had quiet torn up the card (to the quiet b vibrant amusement of my wife) a decided to shop a bit more widely. complete this detour, I did try anoth church the following Sunday, and f the ensuing five months I was pri leged to hear preaching of a kin which made 11 o'clock Sunday mor ing the high spot of the whole wee

Mechanics Unimportant

But to come back on the mai track, it is not the precise point i the order of service allotted to th offering which counts. The importa thing is to recognize that it is nc an intrusion, not a necessary-alas-but slightly-coarse-and-worldly interlud but rather a most natural and re warding part, very definitely as muc an act of worship as the hymns, th prayers or the sermon. That it re quires any very ornate buildup in th form of introductory paragraphs seriously doubt. Flippant and wise cracking remarks intended to arous a jolly feeling of good-fellowship which might cause some tightwad t loosen up and put as much on the plate as he had spent the night before at the movies, are an outrage of which any minister who is in any remove a gentleman will naturally never dream. A quiet and reverent indication, orally expressed or printed in the order o worship, that now the congregation has the prized opportunity of worshi made lovely through the fact that i makes imperious demands — this surely enough and, when wisely done should remove any nervous fear fro even the most punctilious that thereby the service may be contaminated b anything smacking of the commer cially vulgar.

The precise mechanics of "liftin the collection"—to use a phrase whic I have often heard, but still as stranger—seems to me less importan so long as it is done with quiet dig nity. I mean, whether the prayer pre

It Shall Come Back

(Continued from page 11)

selfish culture? No, for history not repeat. But he might say s not palatable in the average h.

V

t these thoughts, though not un- ed to our theme, are not the cen- word. We are saying, as central , in Jeremiah faith, "There is no good." That is the Browning se. It comes from the Browning ration. An organist improvising, suddenly music far better than new, such music as he could hardly composed: it was given. He ped, almost exhausted by very sy. And now he could not recall t he had played. Try as he would, ould not recapture that wonder of d: "Out of three notes not a th note, but a star." Was it there-

---

s or follows the giving of the es; whether the minister himself s and receives them. The style furnishings of the auditorium ld seem to me to suggest the natu- procedure here. My own prefer- e is to have the collectors bring the es forward and place them on table. But here I admit I am very church. In edifices not regarded meetinghouses but replete with ars, and having ministers who are arded and who regard themselves priests, the latter will likely prefer mselves to receive and deposit the tes.

Use Common Sense

Now, were not my allotted space eady overrun, would be the occa- n to quote from some of the letters ave received, expressing anguished ncern as to the precise way the iters are to dispose themselves. e they to come out of the pulpit, to scend the stairs; to turn and face e piece of ecclesiastical furniture, atever its structure and name; are ey to raise said plates—and if so, w high? These and kindred ques- ons must remain unanswered save r the word: "In heaven's name, ethren, use your God-given common nse, after you have seen to it that id common sense, if any, suggests at you do it in the most natural, ast conspicuous, and least awkward ay."

But don't omit this part of the rvice of worship; don't leave the ates outside the door. This would be deprive your people of a rich oppor- nity properly theirs. You might, wever, see to it that the Dorcas ciety covers the plates so com- etely with appropriate velvet that e clank of metallic specie against ually metallic plates is deadened. at is an unholy interlude with ich we may properly dispense.

fore lost, like a friendly project in China, like an orphanage swept away in a flood? Browning's organist declares his faith:

> There shall never be one lost good!
> What was shall live as before.

Then follows a line not fully convincing:

> The evil is null, is nought, is silence
> implying sound.

Then the poem resumes with strong power to convince:

> What was good shall be good, with
> for evil so much good more:
> On earth the broken arcs, in heaven
> the perfect round.

To that faith we summon you. There is enough evidence of the right kind to warrant the venture; there is not enough to spare you the venture. The venture builds its own evidence.

This honest warning must be given. You may not see the farm recovered in your lifetime. As to how soon triumph comes is an item in God's books. He does not balance his books every year. Therefore we live towards him, not towards the calendar. Man is not slave of the calendar. In a Cairo museum we found a small clay tablet, thousands of years old, showing a queen with her arm protectingly round her legless husband. Perhaps some people said that such devotion was foolish, that with her youth and grace she might have married a warrior king. Centuries later the tablet speaks its truth: "Love never fails!" Much less God's love given in Jesus Christ. The seed sown in China or in a Pennsylvania orphanage springs to new life: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land."

VI

Anybody here care to buy a Jeremiah real estate bond? I've one to offer: the Christian faith. What happened in Galilee and on a cross and in the resurrection shall become a Kingdom. Anyone care to thumb his nose against the whole contemporary scene except that in it that can abide the eyes of Christ? Anyone care to take a flier on Christ against all cruelty, in a planet filled with griefs and graves? They must have found Jeremiah's legal deed. Someone hereafter may even find this sermon. If it is found, someone may say: "He must have sounded a fool that morning, even more than usual. But as things have come to pass, he was right. Let's hope they listened to him!" It shall come back, in finer form, all that is of good. "Thus says the Lord of hosts," sovereign ruler of history, "houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land."

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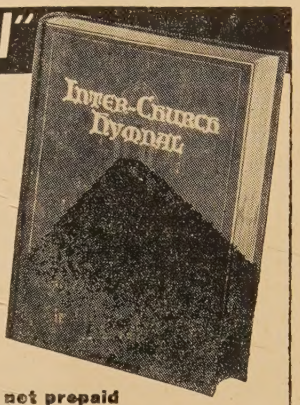

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The Gift of Growth

(Continued from page 36)

question you release an avalanche information which buries you in co fusion and smothers all other conve sation. But I would not call his great mind or a growing mind. H plays with facts but he has never bee played on by any great truths.

When I think of such minds, I reca what Alfred Noyes said, that one our troubles today is that we are mi led by small clever minds, by men wh know their own skills and specialtie but who do not cultivate the large vision which can "see life steadily an see it whole," with the result that w lack great literature and great states manship. To be sure, ours is an ag of specialization and we have to spe cialize in order to get ahead in ou fields. But small, narrow minds, how ever clever, cannot lead us out of ou present morass. We must have men o large vision, sensitive to the spirit o God and moved by his power.

Our Help and Shield

And our Hebrew-Christian faith holds that we human beings are no little self-starting, self-made creatures building ourselves by our own efforts We are bidden to exert all the strength we have and to use all the brains we have. But recall Jesus' questions, "Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life?" There are some things which with all our best efforts we cannot do for ourselves. We have to rely on "him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think."

Recently I received a letter from Dr. James Francis Cooke, former editor of *Etude*. He wrote that he had once asked Victor Herbert where he got so many of his beautiful melodies. The composer replied that many of them came to him in his dreams and he woke up singing them and whistling them. Then Dr. Cooke told how he himself had recently dreamed that a famous contemporary composer was going around Florence bragging of some new composition. This boasting suggested a poem. And awaking, Dr. Cooke went to his study in the middle of the night and wrote these lines which he called, "The Moment of Triumph":

The moment of triumph is always
very dangerous.
Because you believe that you have
made
Your book,
Your picture,
Your drama,
Your symphony,
Your victory.
Poor fool! Poor fool!
Do you not realize that you are merely
The glove on the hand of God?*

*Used by permission of the author.

Those lines born in a dream bear witness by their source and content to the truth that we are receivers rather than creators. Therefore, we cannot in our own strength make ourselves like Christ, but we can "grow in his grace and knowledge."

And now if we are to receive the graces which make for growth, we must put ourselves in contact with them. We must set ourselves in the midst of things which suggest the grace and knowledge of Christ.

When Anatole France set out to write a book, he changed the decorations of his home, creating an atmosphere expressive of the period which was currently engaging his thoughts. When, for instance, he was writing *Thaïs*, he surrounded himself with the art of ancient Greece. For his work on Joan of Arc, he hung on the walls beautiful tapestries of 15th century France.

Our natures are so open to suggestion from our surroundings that when we read only the news of crimes and corruption, it is not long before we think the world is going to the devil. When we put our minds in the presence of "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just," pure, lovely and worthy of praise; when we picture our Lord going about Palestine with his grace of spirit, healing the brokenhearted, preaching deliverance to the captives, setting at liberty the burdened spirits that were bruised —when we abide in Christ's words and let his words abide in us, our horizons begin to lift, our hardness of heart begins to soften, our gloom begins to lighten, and "Into our hearts high yearnings/ Come welling and surging in/ Come from the mystic ocean/ Whose rim no foot has trod/ Some of us call it Longing/And others call it God."

But if we are to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," we must not only expose our minds to his atmosphere, we must yield our hearts to him as the seed surrenders itself to the soil. Recall the occasion when some Greek visitors came asking to see Jesus. The Greek philosophy, you know, held that man perfects himself by rounding out into completion. But to these Greeks, Jesus said: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

In that statement our Lord revealed a point at which Christianity goes beyond Greek philosophy. He brought self-surrender to serve self-development. If we are to grow into godliness, we must break through the shell of self, as the life in the seed breaks through the shell to link itself with the fructifying forces of the soil. We have to let ourselves out in order to let God's Holy Spirit in.

Jesus might have remained a teacher of matchless parables and lived to a ripe old age, respected by his people. But he would not thereby have become the world's Savior. Because he gave himself, men give their hearts to him.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory died,
My highest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Thus we begin to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

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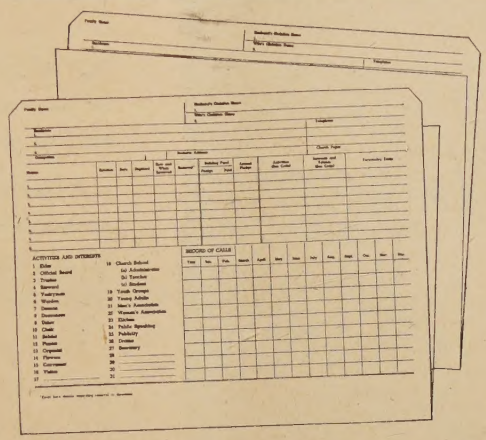

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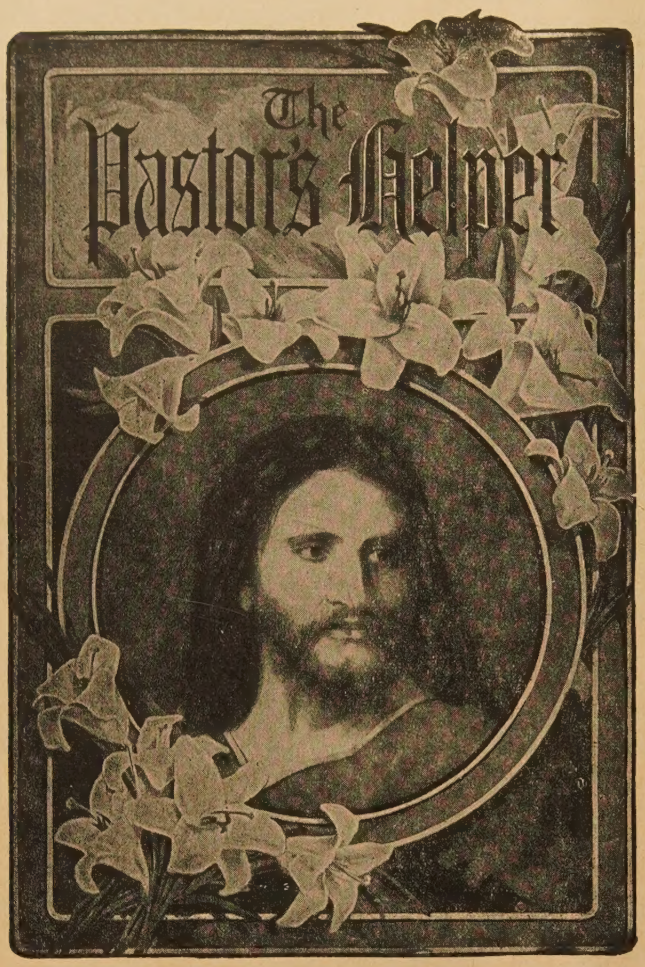

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